NATION

Juvenile rape accused treated leniently by law: HC

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Wholesale inflation falls to 1.31% for 2 months in a row

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

ICC announces equal prize money for men, women

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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K'taka urges Centre to grant ₹5,000 cr for backward region

KALABURAGI, 17 SEPT

Karnataka Cabinet that met on Tuesday, adopted a resolution requesting the Central government to release Rs 5,000 crore for the development of the backward Kalyana Karnataka region. Cabinet, at its meeting chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, also decided to set up a separate secretariat for the region. Siddaramaiah said Cabinet gave its approval for a total 56 proposals amounting Rs 12,692 crore out of which 46 related to Kalyana Karnataka region. Cabinet meeting coincided with the 'Kalyana Karnataka Utsava' celebrated every year to mark the liberation of the region from the Nizam's rule, and also ten years of Article 371(J) of the Constitution under which the region got special status. Kalaburagi is considered as the capital of the 'Kalyana Karnataka' (earlier known as Hyderabad Karnataka).—*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Modi to visit US from 21 to 23 Sept for Quad summit

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay a three-day visit to the US beginning 21 September to attend the annual Quad Summit and address the 'Summit of the Future' at the UN General Assembly. Modi will also address a gathering of the Indian community in New York on 22 September during his three-day visit, the External Affairs Ministry said on Tuesday. The two key engagements of the Prime Minister during the visit are expected to be his participation at the Quad Summit and the 'Summit of the Future' US President Joe Biden will host the fourth 'Quad Leaders Summit' in Wilmington, Delaware, on 21 September. —*PTI*

Sensex closes above 83,000 for 1st time

MUMBAI, 17 SEPT

Benchmark Sensex rose by nearly 91 points to close at a fresh lifetime high while Nifty settled above the 25,400 level for the first time in a range-bound trade on Tuesday amid firm global trends ahead of the much-awaited US Fed's decision on interest rates. Extending its record-setting spree for the second day, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 90.88 points to settle at a lifetime high of 83,079.66. The key index settled above 83,000 level for first time. The NSE Nifty gained 34.80 points. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 7

DGCA to probe 9 Sept IndiGo tail strike incident

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Aviation watchdog Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is probing the incident of tail strike involving an IndiGo aircraft on 9 September and the flight crew has been deroostered, a senior official said on Tuesday. IndiGo said its A321 aircraft was grounded in Bengaluru due to a tail strike on 9 September. It was operating the flight from Delhi to Bengaluru. "The aircraft is currently under maintenance and will be back in operation post necessary repairs," the airline said. According to the senior official at the DGCA, the flight crew has been off rostered and the incident is under investigation. —*PTI*

SC puts the breaks on 'bulldozer justice' till 1 Oct

SC says even 1 case of illegal razing is against Constitution

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

There will be no demolition of properties, including of those accused of crime, till 1 October without its permission, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday while observing that even one instance of illegal demolition was against the "ethos" of the Constitution.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan clarified that its order will not be applicable to unauthorised structures on public roads, footpaths, railways lines or public places like water bodies etc.

The court dismissed concerns by the government, represented by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta - that its order would impact legally sanctioned demolitions. "The heavens won't fall if we ask you to hold your hands till (the) next hearing", the bench declared.

The top court was hearing pleas which alleged that properties of accused were being demolished in several states illegally. Hearing the matter on 2 September, the court had said it will lay down pan-India guidelines to take care of concerns in this regard.

"After that order, there have been statements that the bulldozer will continue ... and it all depends in whose hands the steering is," the bench said, adding it was refraining from saying anything further on that. An irate top court -

The top court was hearing pleas which alleged that properties of accused were being demolished in several states illegally ***PHOTO: PTI***

which has already come down hard, twice this month, on 'bulldozer justice' - also warned against "grandstanding" and "glorification" of this practice. "No demolition, till next, date, without permission of this court," it said, warning the Election Commission may be put on notice.

Referring to the glorification, grandstanding and justification of the demolition action, the bench said, "Now, whether this should happen in our country... Whether the Election Commission can be noticed so that some kind of a thing can be laid down?"

At the outset, a counsel appearing for the petitioners said even after the 2 September hearing demolition was carried out in the country.

Countering his submission, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said a "narrative" was being built over the demolition of properties.

He said the affected parties have not approached the court because they know that they have received notices and their constructions were illegal. When Mehta argued about the narrative being built over the demolition action, the bench said, "Rest assured that outside noise is not influencing us."

"For footpath, we will say not even a notice is needed. Demolish forthwith even if there is a religious structure of any religion," the bench said. The top court was hearing petitions filed by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind and others seeking directions to various states to ensure no further demolition of properties of those accused in cases of rioting and violence takes place. —*PTI*

- After the Supreme Court's halt on "bulldozer justice", SP Chief Akhilesh Yadav apparently hit out at Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, saying this is an "identity crisis" for those who had made the bulldozer their symbol and time has come to park the bulldozer

'HE WILL BE BACK'

AAP names Atishi as Delhi CM after Kejriwal resigns

Arvind Kejriwal

Atishi ***PHOTO: PTI***

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

AAP led by its chief minister designate Atishi staked claim to form a new government in Delhi on Tuesday shortly after Arvind Kejriwal resigned from the post, an effort seen as a bold gambit to seize the initiative ahead of assembly elections due in five months.

"I will work with one goal for the next few months... to bring back Kejriwal as the chief minister," said the 43-year-old, who is set to be Delhi's third woman chief minister after Congress' Sheila Dikshit and BJP's Sushma Swaraj.

Beset by charges of corruption over the excise scam and released from jail last week, AAP supremo submitted his resignation to Lt Governor V K Saxena in the evening, virtually seeking a referendum on his "politics of honesty".

Though Atishi was a frontrunner for the post and considered close to both Kejriwal and his second in command Manish Sisodia, the speculation over who would succeed him was intense. Ending the debate, Kejriwal proposed the name of the Kalkaji legislator at a meeting of the AAP legislative party and it was accepted unanimously.

Up next, the LG will forward Kejriwal's resignation letter to President Droupadi Murmu for her acceptance. He will also send Atishi's letter to form a new government for the president's nod, an official said. Once the resignation is accepted, the LG will invite Atishi to form government and give a date for the oath taking ceremony, the official said, adding that the process may take a few days. The new chief minister will prove majority of her government in the Delhi Assembly, a session of which has been called by the ruling AAP dispensation on 26-27September.

While Kejriwal maintained a studied silence through the day, Atishi went on to request her party MLAs to not congratulate her. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 5

Much awaited J&K polls begin, 7 dists to vote after a decade

JAMMU, 17 SEPT

Seven districts of Jammu and Kashmir, located on either side of Pir Panjal mountain range, will vote for the first time in an Assembly election in 10 years as the stage is set for phase 1 polling in the Union territory on Wednesday.

Over 23 lakh voters will decide the fate of 219 candidates, including 90 independents, who are running for 24 Assembly segments. This will be the first Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019.

According to the Election Commission (EC), a total of 23,27,580 electors are eligible to vote in phase 1, comprising 11,76,462 male, 11,51,058 female and 60 third-gender electors. "As many as 1.23 lakh youth between the age 18 to 19 years, along with 28,309 Person with Disabilities

(PwDs) and 15,774 elderly voters above the age of 85 are also eligible to exercise their franchise in phase one," an EC official said.

The official said a total of 14,000 polling staff will oversee the process at 3,276 polling stations, ensuring smooth conduct of the polls.

The security arrangements include multi-tier forces from the Central Armed Paramilitary Forces (CAPF), Jammu and Kashmir Armed Police and J&K Police, Inspector General of Police Kashmir Zone VK Birdi said.

Prominent candidates in Kashmir include CPI (M)'s Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami, who is seeking a fifth consecutive term from Kulgam segment. AICC general secretary Ghulam Ahmad Mir, National Conference's Sakina Itoo, and PDP's Sartaj Madni and Abdul Rehman Veeri. PDP's Iltija Mufti, running from Bijbehara, is in a triangular contest with NC's Bashir Ahmad Veeri and BJP's Sofi Mohammad Yousuf.

In Jammu, trying their luck are former ministers Sajjad Kitchloo (NC), Khalid Najid Suharwardy (NC) Vikar Rasool Wani (Congress), Abdul Majid Wani (DPAP), Sunil Sharma (BJP), Shakti Raj Parihar (Doda west) and Ghulam Mohammad Saroori, a three-time MLA who is fighting as an independent. —*PTI*

>>>More on page 3

Docs' demands met, Didi sacks 2 officials & replaces top cop

KOLKATA, 17 SEPT

Senior IPS officer Manoj Kumar Verma was appointed the new Kolkata Police commissioner, replacing Vineet Goyal, on Tuesday, a day after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee held a meeting with agitating junior doctors and agreed to their demands in a bid to resolve the more than a month-long impasse over the RG Kar hospital incident.

Director of Health Services (DHS) Debashis Halder, Director of Medical Education (DME) Kaustav Nayak and Deputy Commissioner of Kolkata Police's North Division Abhishek Gupta were also removed as promised by Banerjee during the meeting.

Swapan Soren was appointed the interim DHS while no appointment was announced for the position of the DME.

Banerjee, following marathon discussions with the doctors on Monday night, announced the decision to remove Goyal, who was under fire over handling of the rape and murder of a woman doctor

Manoj Kumar Verma ***PHOTO: ANI***

at the RG Kar hospital.

The parents had alleged that Gupta had taken the money, wrapped it in a plastic bag, and offered it to them.

Dipak Sarkar, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) in Siliguri Police Commissionerate, replaced Gupta. The state also named Jawed Shamim as the ADG and IGP (Law & Order), while Gyanwant Singh was made the ADG and IGP of the Intelligence Bureau (IB).

Meanwhile, one of the agitating junior doctors said they had seen the government order and would announce the future course of their movement following a meeting among themselves. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 5

Remove victim's name, pic: SC orders Wikipedia

Supreme Court on Tuesday directed Wikipedia to remove the photograph and name of the resident doctor who was raped and murdered at RG Kar government hospital in Kolkata. The top court said provisions of the law are very clear that the identity of the victim in rape and murder cases cannot be revealed. During the hearing, a lawyer claimed when Wikipedia was told to remove the victim's name and photograph, they refused, asserting "they can't be censored." —*PTI*

INDIA WINS 5TH ACT HOCKEY TITLE

Defending champions India eked out a fighting 1-0 win over hosts China to claim their fifth Hero Asian Champions Trophy hockey title here in China on Tuesday ***PHOTO: X/@THEHOCKEYINDIA/>>>More on Page 8***

FINGERS POINTED AT ISRAEL

2.7k hurt as pagers explode in Lebanon

BEIRUT, 17 SEPT

Hundreds of handheld pagers exploded simultaneously across Lebanon and in parts of Syria on Tuesday, killing at least eight people, including members of Hezbollah and a girl, and wounding the Iranian ambassador, government officials said.

Officials pointed the finger at Israel in what appeared to be a sophisticated, remote attack that wounded more than 2,700 people at a time of rising tensions across the Lebanon border. The Israeli military declined to comment.

A Hezbollah official who spoke on condition of anonymity told Associated Press that "several hundred" people, including members of the

PHOTO: PTI

group, were wounded in different parts of Lebanon when their handheld pagers exploded. He said a few Hezbollah fighters were also wounded in Syria when the pagers they were carrying exploded.

Lithium batteries, when overheated, can smoke, melt and even catch on fire. Rechargeable lithium batteries are used in consumer products ranging from cellphones and laptops to electric cars. Lithium battery fires can burn up to 590 degree Celsius. The incident comes at a time of heightened tensions between Lebanon and Israel. Photos and videos on social media showed people lying with wounds on their hands or near their pants pockets. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah previously warned the group's members not to carry cellphones, saying that they could be used by Israel to track their movements and to carry out targeted strikes. Iran's Ambassador in Lebanon, has a superficial injury. Lebanon's Health Ministry asked workers to avoid using wireless devices. —*AP*

Leopard spotted crossing flyover in Electronic City

BENGALURU, 17 SEPT

A leopard was spotted crossing a flyover near the Phase 1 toll plaza of Electronic City, placing the area under high alert early Tuesday morning. The sighting was captured on CCTV footage at around 3 am. The big cat was reportedly moving from the Panak India Company area to the Nettur Technical Training Foundation (NTTF) ground. The forest department confirmed that the leopard had not entered the premises. Krishna SR, the Range Forest Officer (RFO) of Anekal, told **Salar News**, "Leopards are known to wander into urban areas in search of food or when their natural habitat is disturbed. Our teams have set up camera traps in key locations." *—Salar News*

Rowdy shot in leg after attacking police constable

BENGALURU, 17 SEPT

The City police shot a rowdy sheeter on his leg for attacking a head constable and trying to resist his arrest. Police said the accused Pavan alias Kadubu was wanted by the police for stripping a youth naked and chasing him in full public. Speaking to reporters Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) West, S Girish said that two special teams were formed to nab Pavan. The police tracked him using his mobile phone location and a team rushed there to arrest him. Pavan attacked head constable Venkatesh and tried to flee. Police inspector Subramani K asked Pavan to surrender and fired a warning shot in the air. Pavan resisted arrest and tried to attack the team with a weapon and attempted to escape. In retaliation he was shot in the leg and arrested. Police shifted him to the Victoria Hospital for treatment. *—Salar News*

Techie steals laptops to cover tomato crop losses

BENGALURU, 17 SEPT

An IT employee from Whitefield was arrested on Tuesday for stealing laptops from his workplace to cover losses incurred due to a failed tomato crop. The accused, Murugesh, had taken a loan to cultivate tomatoes on six acres of land in Hosur but suffered significant financial setbacks. Police seized 50 laptops worth Rs 22 lakhs. According to Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda, Murugesh devised a plan to repay his debt by stealing laptops from IPTL, where he was employed. Under the guise of repairing the devices, he would take them away and later sell them in Hosur. In separate incidents, the Byadarahalli police arrested two individuals, Mohammed and Vishwanath, for stealing two-wheelers. The duo targeted people walking on the road, snatching their phones and fleeing on a bike. Police recovered 20 mobile phones, worth Rs 3 lakh.*—Salar News*

Court extends Darshan's custody till 30 Sept

BENGALURU, 17 SEPT

A court here on Tuesday extended till 30 September the judicial custody of Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa along with his friend Pavithra Gowda and others, who are accused in the Renukaswamy murder case. All the 17 accused, including Darshan and Pavithra, were produced before the 24th Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court through video conferencing from various prisons across the State, where they are lodged, as their judicial custody ended on Tuesday. The police presented some technical evidence related to the case to the court. The 47-year-old actor is currently lodged in Ballari prison. He was shifted there from the Parappana Agrahara Central jail here by obtaining court permission, after a photograph of him hanging out with three others, including a rowdy-sheeter, on the lawns of the jail had gone viral, sparking an uproar. *—PTI*

Cabinet urges Centre to grant Rs 5K cr for backward region

State allocates Rs1K cr for Kalaburagi smart city project

KALABURAGI, 17 SEPT

CM Siddaramaiah with DyCM DK Shivakumar and others during the Cabinet Meeting in Kalaburagi on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

State Cabinet on Tuesday adopted a resolution requesting the Central government to release Rs 5,000 crore for the development of the backward Kalyana Karnataka region.

The Cabinet, at its meeting chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, also decided to set up a separate secretariat for the region.

The Cabinet meeting coincided with the 'Kalyana Karnataka Utsava' celebrated every year to mark the liberation of the region from the Nizam's rule, and also ten years of Article 371(J) of the Constitution under which the region got special status.

Fulfilling a long-standing demand, the Cabinet approved a separate secretariat for Kalyana Karnataka region, Siddaramaiah said.

The region comprises the districts of Bidar, Ballari, Vijayanagara, Kalaburagi, Koppal, Raichur and Yadgir.

Siddaramaiah said the Cabinet gave its approval for a total 56 proposals -- Detailed Project Reports amounting Rs 12,692 crore -- out of which 46 related to Kalyana Karnataka region (Rs 11,770 crore).

The Cabinet gave its nod to upgrade Bidar and Raichur Municipal Councils into Corporations.

Also, approval was given for a drinking water project covering all villages in Bidar and Kalaburagi districts costing Rs 7,200 crore. "This will be sent to the Centre, the Central government will be requested to bear half the cost (Rs 3,600 crore) and the other half will be borne by the state," the Chief Minister said.

The Cabinet also decided to fill 17,439 government posts that are vacant in the region in a phased manner.

Earlier on Tuesday, Siddaramaiah said the state government is planning to develop Kalaburagi into a smart city with an estimated investment of Rs 1,685 crore, which will improve the quality of life for its residents and attract investment in backward districts.

Under the Mahatma Gandhi Nagar Vikas Yojana 2.0, Rs 200 crore each is being provided for basic infrastructure development in Kalaburagi and Ballari municipal corporations, he said.

A scheme called "Kalyana Patha" has been developed to improve road connectivity and rural development in the Kalyana Karnataka region, he said.

Under this, the state government will build 1,150 km of roads in rural Assembly constituencies at a cost of Rs 1,000 crore.

—PTI

Govt to examine PFI's alleged role in Nagamangala riot

KALABURAGI, 17 SEPT

- Clashes broke out between two groups during a Ganesh idol procession in the town in Mandya district following which mobs went on a rampage targeting several shops and vehicles leading to tension on 11 September night.

The State Home Minister G Parameshwara on Tuesday said that alleged role of "outsiders" belonging to the banned Popular Front of India (PFI) in the violence at Nagamangala will be examined and action taken based on the probe report.

Clashes broke out between two groups during a Ganesh idol procession in the town in Mandya district following which mobs went on a rampage targeting several shops and vehicles leading to tension on 11 September night.

He noted that two officials -- Deputy Superintendent of Police and Inspector -- have already been suspended, and added that further action will be taken based on the report.

The Minister said the government has taken the Nagamangala violence seriously and there is no question of taking such incidents lightly. "BJP makes such allegations, but we too have responsibility, we don't take anything lightly."

On demand for a National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe into Nagamangala violence by BJP which alleged "failure" of State's home department, Parameshwara said: "they keep saying such things, we will not listen to all that." An argument had broken out between two groups, when the procession by devotees from Badri Koppalu village reached a place of worship on 11 September, and some miscreants hurled stones, which escalated the situation. Following this a few shops were vandalised and goods torched and vehicles set on fire, they added.

To allegations from some BJP leaders that the party MLA Munirathna was arrested "hurriedly", Parameshwara said, police acted after the complaint was given, "what's wrong in that?. *—PTI*

Bengaluru to experience power outages for 2 days

BENGALURU, 17 SEPT

The Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM) has announced scheduled power supply interruptions across several areas on 18 September and 19 September due to maintenance works. BESCOM announced that the work will be carried out by the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited.

These power outages are expected to impact multiple subdivisions under the Jayanagar Division and other key areas in the City over the next few days.

According to BESCOM, under Jayanagar Division affected areas will be Gubbalala, parts of Uttarahalli, ISRO Layout Industrial Area, Adarsha Apartments, Mantri Tranquil Apartments, Maruthi Layout, Bharath Layout, Doddakallasandra Industrial Area, Agara, Kumaraswamy Layout, Vittal Nagar, Yadalam Nagar, and Maruthi Nagar. The power interruption will occur on 18 September, between 10 am and 3 pm.

Further, on 19 September, from 10 am to 5 pm, power interruptions will affect areas under the NRS Receiving Station, including Manjunathnagar, Shivanagara, Gayathrinagar, Prakash Nagar, LN Pura, Subramanyanagara, Vijayanagara, Rajajinagar (2nd and 6th Blocks), Agrahara, Dasarahalli, Indranagara, Sankarmata, Brigade Apartment, and various streets along Magadi Road.

Additionally, the Telecom Layout MUSS station will undergo maintenance on the same day, affecting Hosahalli Main Road, Padarayanapura, JJR Nagar, Rayapura, Cotton Pet, Binny Pete, Mysore Road, and surrounding areas between 10 am and 5 pm. Power interruptions will also occur at Manyata Tech Park MUSS on 19 September, 2024, between 11am and 5 pm. Areas impacted include Manyata Residency, IBM Blocks, Philips, Fidelity, SNN Clermont Apartments, Hebbal Kempapura, and other connected regions. Residents are advised to dial 1912 or SMS to 58888 for any complaints or queries. *—Salar News*

NAMO AT 74

Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment Shobha Karandlaje with BJP leader R Ashoka at party State office in Bengaluru on Tuesday on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 74th birthday celebrations **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

EXEMPT PEPPER FROM GST: WADIYAR

BENGALURU, 17 SEPT

Lok Sabha MP Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar on Tuesday said he has written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to continue to exempt pepper from Goods and Services Tax (GST).

"Met Hon'ble FM Nirmala Sitharaman Ji to discuss GST exemption for black pepper, a vital issue for farmers in Kodagu, Hassan & Chikmagalur districts. Requested exemption continuation, citing agricultural produce classification & potential negative impact on farmers & exports (sic)," Wadiyar posted on X. According to Wadiyar, the imposition of GST on these products could have significant negative consequences for the plantation districts of the State, including Kodagu, Hassan and Chikkamagaluru, as well as for growers in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Wadiyar requested in his letter that after drying of green pepper, this dried pepper could be given a separate HSN code and exempt it from GST applicability. *—PTI*

DA case: SC seeks DKS' reply

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought the responses of the Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and the State government on a plea against withdrawal of consent to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for probing the disproportionate assets (DA) case against him.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan issued notice to them on the plea filed by BJP MLA Basangouda R Patil (Yatnal) in which he has challenged the Karnataka High Court's order of 29 August rejecting his plea against withdrawal of consent.

During the hearing, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Shivakumar, pointed out that the CBI, which should be most aggrieved by the High Court order, has not come before the Top Court in appeal.

On 29 August, the High Court held as "non-maintainable" a petition filed by the CBI challenging the decision of Karnataka's government to withdraw consent to it for investigating a DA case against Shivakumar.

—PTI

DYCM URGES SEERS TO SPEAK ON MUNIRATHNA ROW

BENGALURU, 17 SEPT

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday urged leaders, seers, and members of the Vokkaliga community to publicly condemn the casteist remarks made by BJP MLA Munirathna.

Speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence, Shivakumar said, "BJP leaders need to acknowledge the issue and hold key figures such as Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka, State BJP President BY Vijayendra, and Union Ministers accountable for addressing the matter." On his recent meeting with Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, during his US trip, he said that he does not require permission to meet his party leader. Responding to BJP's allegations about the involvement of outsiders from the banned Popular Front of India and Bangladeshi immigrants' in the violence during the Ganesha idol procession in Nagamangala he said, "Government will ensure that guilty are punished, and the police will take the necessary actions." *—Salar News*

Cong files case against BJP MLA over remarks on RaGa

BENGALURU, 17 SEPT

State Congress filed a complaint against BJP MLA Basangouda R Patil (Yatnal) to the Karnataka Director General of Police on Tuesday over his statement against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. The Congress workers further demanded strict legal action against the Patil.

This came after the BJP MLA from Vijayapura constituency slammed the Lok Sabha LoP over his remarks on caste during his recent visit to the United States.

Patil questioned whether Rahul knew in which caste he was born and if he did not know if he was born to "Muslims or Christians."

Earlier BJP State Chief BY Vijayendra said that Rahul and the Congress' preteens as Mohabbat ki Dukaan have been unmasked. Rahul was on a three-day visit to the US. During this, he met several US leaders and held multiple interactions with the Indian diaspora. However, his remarks, especially those on the reservation and Sikh community, have triggered a row, with BJP accusing him and the Congress party of inciting people through a 'divisive' agenda. *—ANI*

Congress leaders protest against Sena leader Sanjay Gaikwad for remarks against Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, in Bengaluru **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

'Swallowing criticism in the interest of the party'

SHIVAMOGGA, 17 SEPT

With some leaders up in arms questioning his leadership, the State BJP President BY Vijayendra on Tuesday said "swallowing everything" in the interest of the party, he was working towards achieving the goal of bringing the party to power with a clear majority in the next elections.

He rejected criticism that he is not taking seniors of the party into confidence, as he asserted that he is proud of the fact that he is veteran leader and former Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa's son, but was not arrogant.

A section of party leaders led by senior legislators Basanagouda Patil Yatnal and Ramesh Jarkiholi has been openly critical of Vijayendra, accusing him of indulging in "adjustment politics" with the ruling Congress, and trying to keep the party in his clutches along with Yediyurappa.

"As I have both the will and the capability to manage the responsibility, seniors have given me this responsibility; I'm managing it well and will continue to do so," he said.

—PTI

CALL FOR BASIC NECESSITIES

Lack of lactation rooms at Metro stn sparks row

BENGALURU, 17 SEPT

The absence of lactation facilities at Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has sparked public outrage after a mother was forced to breastfeed her child behind a cardboard partition at Trinity Metro Station on the Purple Line.

The incident occurred on Sunday afternoon when a couple struggled to find a private space for breastfeeding. The mother ultimately had to sit behind a cardboard partition near the ticket counter to feed her child.

A video of the incident went viral on social media, leading to widespread criticism of BMRCL. Speaking to **Salar News**, Ananya Rao, a 29-year-old mother of a 5-month-old baby residing near Indira Nagar, Bengaluru, expressed her frustration. "It is frustrating that we have such well-maintained stations but no space to breastfeed. As a new mother, I avoid taking the metro because I don't know where I'll be able to feed my baby if she starts crying. We deserve better."

Echoing similar sentiments, Deepa K Ramesh, a design architect and 34-year-old mother of two children, Sakshi,2, and Sanjay, 5, said, "Every metro station has spacious toilets, ATMs, vending machines, and food kiosks, yet there is no place where a mother can privately and comfortably feed her child. It's ironic that we boast about development while neglecting such basic human needs."

- The incident occurred on Sunday afternoon when a couple struggled to find a private space for breastfeeding. The mother ultimately had to sit behind a cardboard partition near the ticket counter to feed her child. video of the incident went viral on social media

Speaking to **Salar News**, a BMRCL official, who wished to remain anonymous, acknowledged the issue: "The incident at Trinity Station has brought to our attention the urgent need for suitable breastfeeding and childcare rooms. While we have a care centre at Majestic, we recognize that this is not enough. We are currently reviewing our infrastructure and will soon introduce childcare rooms at several key stations." The official further noted that the care centres will be designed based on feedback from mothers through a planned survey.

—Salar News

Man rescued after suicide bid disrupts Metro services

BENGALURU, 17 SEPT

A man was rescued on Tuesday after he allegedly attempted suicide by jumping on the track at Jnanabharathi metro station. Officials said after the incident services were briefly disrupted on the entire Purple Line. The incident occurred at 2.13 pm, they said. The reason behind this extreme step is not known yet.

Immediately Emergency Trip System (ETS) was activated by the staff and the man was rescued by the station controller and team. As per preliminary information, no injuries were reported. Train services on the purple line were restored at 2.30 pm. Toll 2.30 pm, two trains were operated in a short loop at Mysuru Road instead of Challaghatta metro station, they said.

Speaking to Salar News, an eyewitness said, "When I arrived at the station by 2:20 PM, the incident had already unfolded and the man had already jumped onto the tracks. Although the train travelled about ten meters over him, luckily his life was not in danger. The metro driver reduced speed significantly, and train services were immediately stopped to rescue him." Jnanabharathi Police official told **Salar News**, "We are yet to determine the reason for this suicide attempt. Both of his family and Siddharth are in our station."

Salar News with Agencies

J & K's electoral battle POST ABROGATION

Jammu and Kashmir, a region long marred by political turbulence and separatist unrest, is gearing up for Assembly elections after 10 years. The upcoming polls will test the region's democratic resilience following the abrogation of Article 370. Here is all you need to know about it

WHEN DID THE LAST ELECTION TAKE PLACE?

- The last Assembly polls were held in Nov 2014
- PDP won 28 seats, BJP 25 (Total seats: 87, majority mark: 44)
- PDP-BJP formed coalition govt with Mufti Mohammad Sayeed as CM
- After Mufti's death on 7 January, 2016, his daughter Mehbooba Mufti succeeded him
- In June 2018, BJP withdrew support to PDP, leading to the Governor's rule
- The then governor Satya Pal Malik dissolved the Assembly in Nov 2018, despite parties' interest in forming a government, and President's rule was imposed on 20 December, 2018

THE ABROGATION FIASCO

- On 5 Aug, 2019, Centre revoked the special status granted under Article 370 to J&K
- Article 370 allowed the state govt to make its laws
- Article 35A under 370 restricted non-Kashmiris from buying property in the region
- The abrogation has attracted investors to the region, leading to increased interest in its untapped potential
- Centre bifurcated J&K into 2 Union territories – Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh – to be ruled directly from New Delhi
- No polls have been held in the two areas since then

PROTESTS

- A day before Article 370 abrogation, Centre ordered a total communication blackout, shutting down TV, mobile phones and internet
- Curfew was imposed in the region to curb protest demanding restoration of statehood
- 4,000 people including journalists arrested
- Ex-CM Mehbooba and Omar Abdullah placed under house arrest for months
- Internet restored nearly after a year
- Kashmir lost 90,000 jobs and Rs, 18,000 cr due to communication blackouts

DELIMITATION OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

- Delimitation was carried out in 2022 to bifurcate the two UTs
- Delimitation is redrawing boundaries of electoral constituencies
- In 2020, 3-member delimitation panel formed
- In 2022, panel added 6 seats to Jammu, 1 to Kashmir

TOTAL SEATS: 90

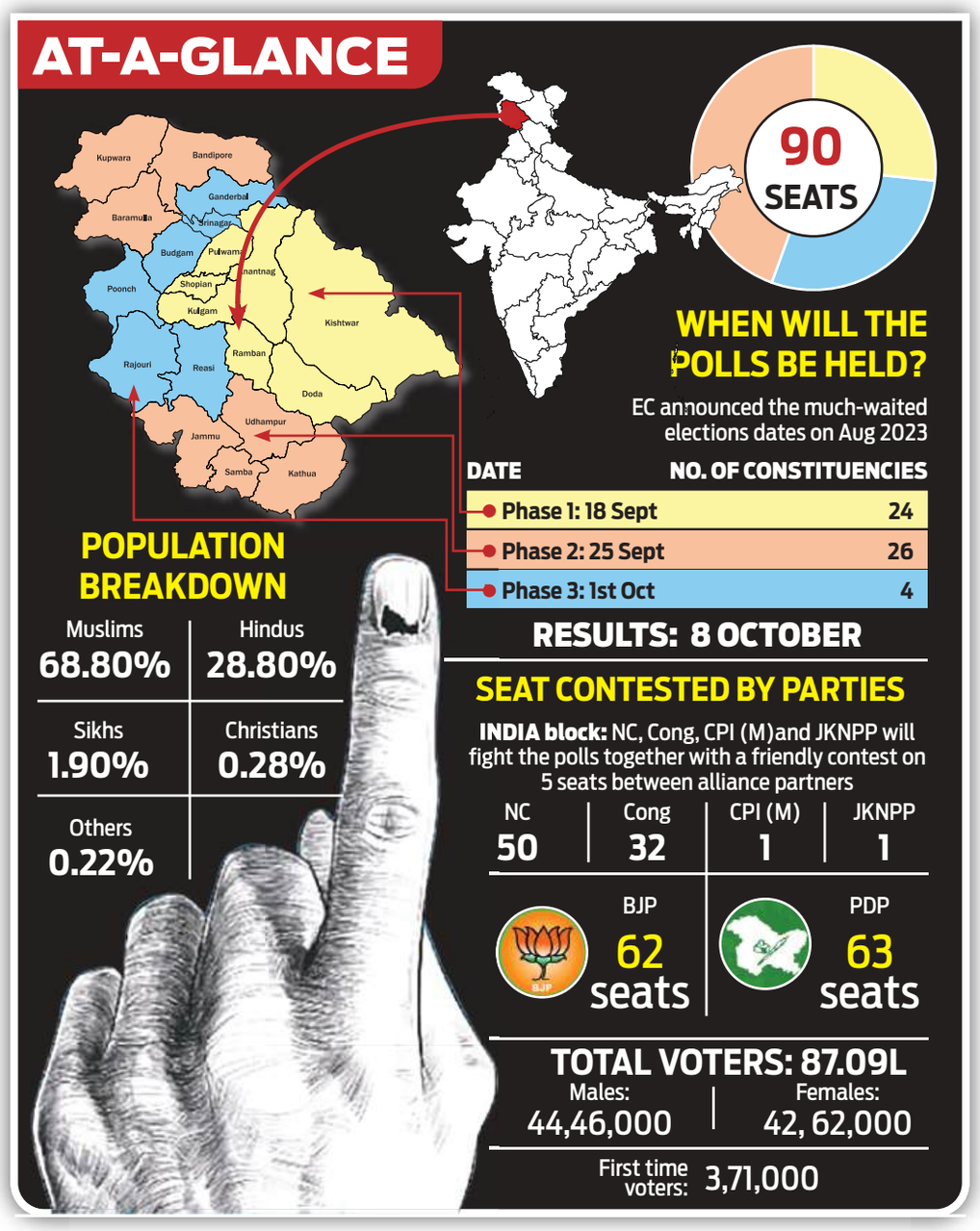
43	47
FOR JAMMU	FOR KASHMIR

SC UPHOLDS ABROGATION

In Dec 2023, Supreme Court upheld the abrogation saying that Article 370 had been a "temporary provision" and removing it in 2019 was constitutionally valid

However, it asked the Election Commission to hold polls by September and to restore Jammu and Kashmir's statehood

AT-A-GLANCE



WHEN WILL THE POLLS BE HELD?

EC announced the much-waited elections dates on Aug 2023

DATE	NO. OF CONSTITUENCIES
Phase 1: 18 Sept	24
Phase 2: 25 Sept	26
Phase 3: 1st Oct	4

RESULTS: 8 OCTOBER

POPULATION BREAKDOWN

Muslims	Hindus
68.80%	28.80%
Sikhs	Christians
1.90%	0.28%
Others	
0.22%	

SEAT CONTESTED BY PARTIES

INDIA block: NC, Cong, CPI (M)and JKNPP will fight the polls together with a friendly contest on 5 seats between alliance partners

NC	Cong	CPI (M)	JKNPP
50	32	1	1

BJP	PDP
62 seats	63 seats

TOTAL VOTERS: 87.09L

Males:	Females:
44,46,000	42, 62,000

First time voters: 3,71,000

POLL PROMISES

CONG

- Recruitment for 1L vacant positions
- The female head of the family receives ₹3,000 each month
- 11 kg of rice for each member of the family
- ₹25 lakh in health insurance
- ₹5 lakh interest-free loan to women who participate in self-help organisations

BJP

- ₹18,000 per year to the senior most woman in every household
- 2 free LPG cylinders every year
- 3,000 yearly travel allowance to college students
- ₹10,000 under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi for farmers
- 50% reduced electricity rates for agricultural use

NC

- Restoration of Article 370 and 35 A
- Facilitate return of Kashmiri Pandits
- Provide 1 lakh jobs to youth
- Increase the medical allowance of pensioners to ₹1,000 from ₹300
- Reinstate free education up to university level
- Free travel for all public transport

PDP

- Restoration of statehood
- Prioritise press freedom
- Dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits
- Revocation of the Public Safety Act, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)
- Regularise 60,000 daily wagers, reinstate OPS

SEPARATISTS ENTER THE POLL FRAY

Parties such as PDP have welcomed separatist leaders, who once called for election boycotts. Jamaat-e-Islami is also coming forward to participate in the elections after 40 years. Here are some of them:

SARJAN BARKATI

- Will contest against Omar Abdullah in Ganderbal
- He is a jailed separatist leader and cleric who orchestrated protests over Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani Burhan's killing
- He is jailed for orchestrating violent protests in Shopian and Kulgam in 2016 under PSA and UAPA for inflammatory speeches

JAVID HUBBI

- Javid Hubbi, the son of former Hurriyat leader Ghulam Mohammad Hubbi, is the candidate of Engineer Rashid's AIP from the Charar-e-Sharief
- In LS polls, Rashid, who was in jail, had won from Baramulla defeating Omar
- While Rashid had contested as an Independent, now there is big demand for the AIP ticket in Assembly polls
- Charar-e-Sharief was won in 2014 by PDP's Ghulam Nabi Lone Hanjura, defeating senior NC leader and former finance minister Abdul Rahim Rather by over 5,000 votes. Both Hanjura and Rather are in the race again

AGA MUNTAZIR MEHDI

- PDP has fielded Aga Muntazir Mehdi, a prominent Shia cleric and the son of Hurriyat executive member Aga Syed Hassan, from Budgam
- Mehdi plays a significant role in the Anjuaman-E-Sharie Shian, an influential Shia party that is also a constituent of the Mirwaiz-led Hurriyat faction
- Mehdi's family is associated with the separatist movement

KALEEMULLAH

- He is an Independent backed by Jamaat-e-Islami
- Kaleemullah is contesting from Langate in North Kashmir's Kupwara
- He is the son of the outfit's former general secretary Ghulam Qadir Lone
- Engineer Rashid represented the seat in 2008 and 2014. In 2014, Rashid had defeated the PDP's Ghulam Nabi Ganai by around 2,500 votes

ISSUES FACED IN JAMMU & KASHMIR

THE CHINA ROW

Along with militancy, J&K also battles threat from China. Indian and Chinese militaries have been locked in a standoff after the Galwan Valley clash in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides, killing 20 Indian soldiers. China is accused of encroaching on India's land, building bridges and tunnels to facilitate military movement. Congress' Rahul Gandhi criticised the Modi government over India's border issues with China and said that China has encroached on 4,000 square km of land in Ladakh

RISE IN TERROR ATTACKS

After the LS election results were announced, there was rise in terror attacks in key J&K areas such as Rajouri, Doda, Kupwara and Resai. There have been 25 terror attacks in the Union territory in 98 days, in which 21 jawans and 15 citizens were killed

LADAKH ROW

Ladakh has seen constant protests with thousands demonstrating in sub-zero temperatures to highlight the effects of climate change under the Sixth Schedule and over the demand for statehood. The protests are led by activist Sonam Wangchuck. In March 2024, he and others started a 21-day fast-unto-death 'Climate Fast' to press for their demands

LEADERS UNDER HOUSE ARREST

Non-BJP leaders, such as Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, have frequently alleged that they are placed under house arrest on Republic Day, Independence Day, or during visits by Modi. On the fifth anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370 they were placed under house arrest. Omar Abdullah shared pictures of the locked gate of his house, but the Central government denied these allegations

PHOTOS: ANI/PTI/X

Research: Amina Afaq, Saptarshi, Anamika Holla and Meena Kasi; Design: G Vishwanatha

PHOTO: PTI

2 missing in Reasi landslide, search on

JAMMU, 17 SEPT

At least two people have been reported missing following a major landslide in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, a senior government officer said on Tuesday. The officer said that rescuers have intensified their search efforts, deploying over a dozen earthmovers to clear the debris in the affected area. The landslide occurred near Avtar Morh near the remote Chassana area along the under-construction Budhhal-Mahore-Gool road on Monday, Reasi Deputy Commissioner Vishesh Paul Mahajan said. Mahajan confirmed that two persons, including the driver of an earthmover, are reported missing and are believed to be trapped under the debris. He said that over 12 earthmovers are engaged in removing the debris and find the missing. —*PTI*

Vandalism of Gandhi statue sparks row in UP

CHENNAI, 17 SEPT

A statue of Mahatma Gandhi was found vandalised in a village here, leaving the local residents outraged, police said on Tuesday. A probe has been launched to identify the miscreants, a police officer said. Local villagers installed the statue in 1996 along the Lucknow-Ballia Highway near Chhedawari village. Police said it was vandalised on Monday night. Motigarpur Police Station in-charge Tarun Kumar Patel said, "We will soon arrest those responsible for the vandalism and undertake repairs of the statue as per administrative directives." Statue has been a focal point for Gandhi Jayanti celebrations in the area with officials and local residents paying homage each year. Beautification work of the statue was to commence soon. —*PTI*

Mathura row: SC seeks Muslims' reply

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Muslim parties to apprise it whether an appeal before a division bench of Allahabad High Court would lie against the single-judge order which rejected their petition challenging the maintainability of 18 cases related to the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute in Mathura. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar, which was initially inclined to issue notice to the Hindu side on the appeal filed by Muslim parties against the 1 August order of the High Court, posted the matter for further hearing on 4 November. The bench said that there are several legal issues in the matter, which needs consideration. —*PTI*

SC seeks UP govt's reply on Kappan's plea in UAPA case

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought the Uttar Pradesh government's response to a plea of Kerala-based journalist Siddique Kappan seeking relaxation of a bail condition of reporting to police every week in a UAPA case registered against him. A bench of Justices PS Narasimhan and R Mahadevan asked the state government to file its reply on the plea of Kappan, who was arrested in October 2020 while on his way to Hathras in Uttar Pradesh after a Dalit woman from there died following a gang-rape. On 9 September, 2022, the top court granted bail to Kappan, who was in jail for almost two years, while observing that every person has the right to free expression. The police had earlier claimed the accused were trying to disturb law and order in Hathras. —*PTI*

Juvenile rape accused treated leniently by law: HC

Court says govt has learnt no lessons from Nirbhaya case

INDORE, 17 SEPT

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has observed that juveniles were being treated "rather too leniently" in the country, and that the legislature has "not learnt any lessons" from the 2012 Nirbhaya gang-rape case.

In an order passed on 11 September, Justice Subodh Abhyankar of the High Court's Indore bench made these strongly-worded observations while dismissing an appeal filed by a man against the lower court's sentence in the case of four-year-old girl's rape in 2017.

The convict was 17 years old at the time of the rape incident in 2017. He escaped from a juvenile correction home in 2019 along with seven other boys, six months after being sentenced.

Expressing displeasure over this development, the High Court said, "As a parting note, this Court is once again at pains to observe that juveniles in this country are being treated rather too leniently, and that the Legislature, to the utter misfortune of the victims of such crimes, has still not learnt any lessons from the horrors of Nirbhaya, reported as (2017) 6 SCC 1 (Mukesh v. State NCT of Delhi)."

Nirbhaya case accused escaped from a juvenile correction home in 2019 along with seven other boys PHOTO: PTI

"Looking to the overwhelming medical evidence available in the present case, it does not take an expert to see as to how demonic the appellant's conduct was while he was a juvenile, and his mindset can also be gathered from the fact that he has also absconded from the observation home." the court observed.

An additional sessions judge of Indore had sentenced the person concerned to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment on 8 May, 2019 under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and ordered that he be sent to jail when he turns 21.

The lower court's sentence was challenged in the High Court, who absconded from the juvenile home along with seven other boys on 13 November, 2019.

The High Court, after hearing both sides, upheld the lower court's decision and dismissed the convict's appeal.

The Nirbhaya case pertains to the 2012 gang-rape and murder of a 23-year-old physiotherapy student. The case sparked nationwide protests with demands for stricter laws to deal with such cases. —*PTI*

2021 MON CIVILIAN DEATHS

SC grants relief to 30 jawans in Nagaland killing

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Tuesday closed criminal proceedings against 30 Army personnel accused of killing 13 civilians in a 2021 botched operation to ambush militants in Nagaland's Mon district. It also said the case may be taken to its logical end if the Centre sanctions their prosecution.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and PB Varale also said the order will not prevent the Army from taking any disciplinary action against the personnel.

The Nagaland government in separate proceedings has challenged the denial of sanction to prosecute the Army personnel.

The apex court closed the proceedings on two separate petitions filed by wives of the personnel, including a major rank officer, who sought closure of the case lodged by Nagaland police.

The wives were seeking closure of the criminal proceedings on the ground that the state government has no jurisdiction to prosecute the personnel due to immunity granted under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).

PHOTO: PTI

Their plea contended that prior sanction from the Centre was needed to initiate any legal proceedings against Army personnel if the area falls under AFSPA.

In April last year, the Central government had denied sanction to prosecute the Army men who were allegedly involved in the botched ambush at Oting in Mon district of the state. —*PTI*

Time for admin to wakeup: HC raps Delhi over UPSC centre deaths

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

It is time for the administration to wake up from "deep slumber" and take appropriate steps to address the condition of city's coaching centres, the Delhi High Court has said, while granting interim bail till 30 November to four co-owners of the basement of an Old Rajinder Nagar building that housed a coaching centre where three civil services aspirants drowned in July.

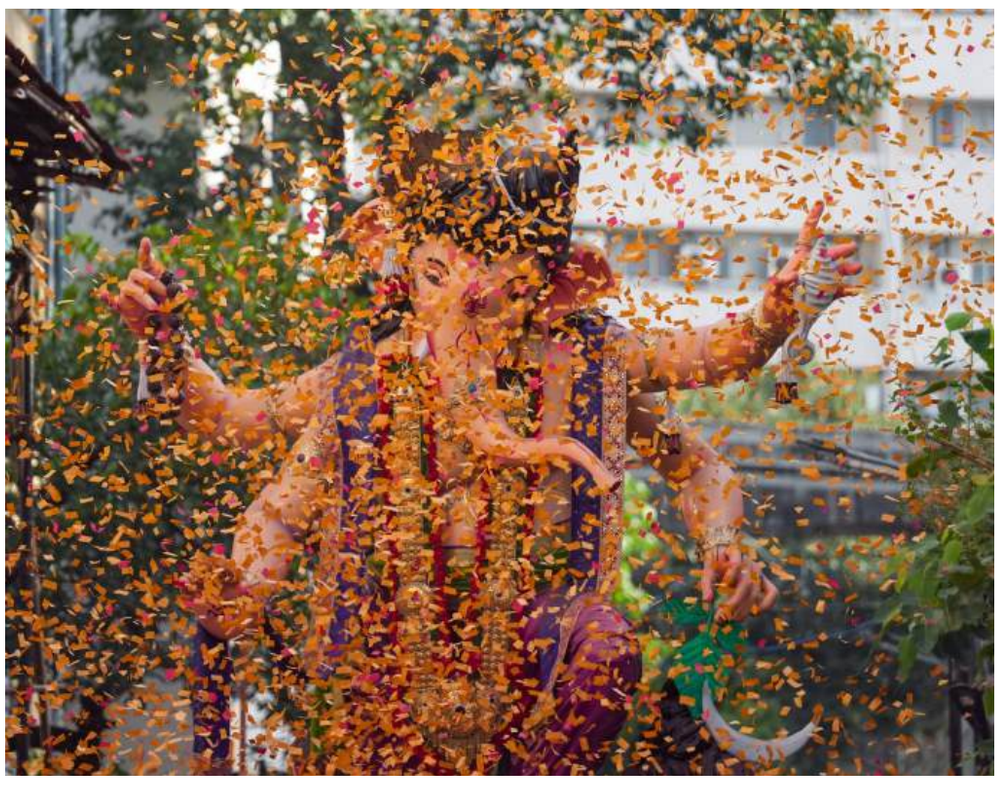
Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma, in the order passed on 13 September on the bail applications of the accused, lamented the administration's "callous attitude", saying said such "incidents keep on happening" and innocent people lose their lives because of "mischievous people" who only want to earn money.

Justice Sharma urged the Lieutenant Governor (LG) to appoint a committee, to inspect all coaching centres and give suggestions to ensure that they do not run in unsafe conditions. Parents of such students send their children to the coaching institute shelling out substantial money from their hard-earned income with an aspiration that their children will become something in their lives, it said.

PHOTO: PTI

Three civil service aspirants died after the basement of the building housing Rau's IAS Study Circle was flooded following heavy rain in central Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar on 27 July. —*PTI*

UNTIL NEXT TIME



An idol being carried for immersion at the end of Ganesha Chaturthi festival, in Mumbai, on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

Kerala denies misuse of Wayanad landslide funds

T'PURAM, 17 SEPT

Kerala government has denied reports circulating in the media regarding the funds spent in connection with the Wayanad disaster, calling it factually incorrect, per an official release from Kerala Chief Minister's Office (CMO).

It said that the State government had submitted a memorandum to the Central government seeking immediate additional assistance for the disaster. Preliminary estimates of the necessary expenses for various aspects were clearly stated in the memorandum. However, these estimates are now being misrepresented in the media as actual expenditure in the disaster-affected areas, which is untrue,

This comes after BJP chief K Surendran accused Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan-led Kerala government of presenting inflated relief expenditures to the High Court in connection with the Wayanad landslides. —*ANI*

WB faces flood threat as dams release surplus water

KOLKATA, 17 SEPT

The flood-like situation in several districts of West Bengal is likely to worsen as water discharge from The Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) dams increased sharply in a short span of time, officials said on Tuesday.

DVC said it was releasing 90,000 cusecs of water from Panchet and Maithon dams at 11.30 pm on Monday.

The release of water increased to 2.1 lakh cusecs by 6.54 am on Tuesday, marking a significant increase in only seven hours. The discharge further escalated to 2.5 lakh cusecs by 8.31 am, with a rise of 40,000 cusecs in just one-and-a-half hours, DVC officials said.

DVC issued a 'red alert' following the release of water.

The discharge was increased due to high upstream water flow, they said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had on Monday night expressed concerns over the situation, warning of a potential flood-like situation in at least seven districts downstream due to release of water from dams in neighbouring Jharkhand.

Addressing a press conference, Banerjee alleged that DVC was releasing water without informing her government.

"I have called the Jharkhand CM three times, urging him to regulate the release of water," she had said.

After two days of incessant rain in several districts of West Bengal, the deep depression causing the downpour has moved towards Jharkhand bringing in heavy rainfall in the neighbouring state. —*PTI*

13 SAMPLES FOR NIPAH TESTED NEGATIVE: MINISTER

T'PURAM, 17 SEPT

Kerala Health Minister Veena George said on Tuesday that 13 people who came into contact with a 24-year-old man who died from the Nipah virus in Malappuram district last week have tested negative for the disease.

Of the total 175 people on the contact list of the deceased man, the samples of 13 people, comprised in the high-risk category, were tested negative at the Manjeri Government Medical College in Malappuram, she told reporters here.

George further said the state health department has been in constant contact with the Centre and the health authorities in Karnataka where the deceased man was studying. —*PTI*

Malayalam cinema to get new film association

T'PURAM, 17 SEPT

At a time when the Malayalam cinema industry is reeling from the shocking revelations in the Justice K Hema Committee report, a group of film personalities are set to launch a new film body aimed at revitalising the sector and promoting a fair and just workplace.

A vision notes of the proposed outfit, Progressive Filmmakers' Association, has been circulated among the industry members.

The note, accessed by the media, is purportedly signed by well-known filmmakers Anjali Menon, Lijo Jose Pellissery, Rajeev Ravi and Aashiq Abu, actress Rima Kallingal and producer Bineesh Chandra. The development came weeks after differences of opinion had cropped up in the existing outfits like the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA) and the Film Employees Federation of Kerala (FEFKA) over the stands it's leadership had taken with regard to the revelations in the Justice Hema Committee report which sheds light into the harassments and exploitations in the Malayalam cinema. —*PTI*

K Hema PHOTO: ANI

Man gets bail in actress assault case

New Delhi, 17 Sept

The Supreme Court on Tuesday gave bail to Sunil NS, the main accused in the 2017 actress assault case in Kerala in which actor Dileep is also an accused. A bench of Justices AS Oka and Pankaj Mithal was hearing Sunil's plea challenging the Kerala High Court order dismissing his bail application in the case. He is also known as 'Pulsar Suni'. —*PTI*

CHALLENGES MAR PROJECT

Amid flak, Project Cheetah completes 2 yr

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Several promising births, fewer but painful losses, growing optimism and some criticism marked the second year of the internationally acclaimed Project Cheetah, which looks ahead with renewed hope and ambition amid many challenges.

As the grand initiative completes two years on Tuesday, authorities are speeding up efforts to bring in a new batch of cheetahs from Africa to the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, which will be their second home in India, and setting up a conservation breeding centre in the Bunni grasslands in Gujarat.

They also aim to establish a larger cheetah habitat, spanning the territorial divisions of Neemuch (about 1,000 sq km) and Mandsaur (500 sq km) in Madhya Pradesh, along with the Bhainsrorgarh Wildlife Sanctuary (208 sq km) and Chittorgarh (around 1,000 sq km) in Rajasthan.

13 cubs were born on Indian soil in the second year PHOTO: PTI

In a major boost to the project, 13 cubs were born on Indian soil in the second year. Namibian cheetah Aasha gave birth to three cubs in January. Another female from Namibia, Jwala, also had three cubs that month. Jwala had delivered four cubs last year, but only one survived. South African cheetah Gamini had six cubs in March, bringing the total number of cubs to 13 this year.

While authorities have been busy preparing the 368-sq km Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary for the next batch of cheetahs, the ones in Kuno remain inside enclosures that are only 0.5 to 1.5 square kilometers in size.

This year, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) also approved a proposal to create a four-part web series on Project Cheetah to showcase the country's efforts to the world.

As Project Cheetah enters its third year, conservationists are closely monitoring its progress, hoping that the cheetahs can be reintroduced to the wild with minimal human intervention. —*PTI*

4 killed in explosion at firecracker factory in UP

FIROZABAD, 17 SEPT

Four people, including a three-year-old girl and a woman, were killed in a sudden explosion at a firecracker godown-cum-factory in Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad district, police said on Tuesday.

Six people were injured in the incident, which took place in the factory located in the Naushera area under Shikohabad police station limits on Monday night, a senior police official said.

The bodies of the deceased have been sent for post-mortem and the injured have been hospitalised, the official said.

Deepak Kumar, IG, Agra range, who reached the incident spot and inspected it, told PTI, "So far about 10 people have been rescued from the building, of which four have died while, six injured have been admitted to the hospital."

Team of fire and police departments and district administration are engaged in relief work under supervision of the superintendent of police and Chief Minister's Officie officials, he said.

PHOTO: PTI

According to information obtained from the district hospital, the deceased were Meera Devi, 45, Aman, 20, Gautam Kushwaha, 18, and Kumari Ichha, 3. The senior police officer said a state disaster response force (SDRF) team will also reach the spot soon so that relief and rescue work can be expedited. —*PTI*

ATISHI'S 'METEORIC' RISE FROM ADVISER TO CM

From being an adviser to the Delhi government to becoming a key face of the Cabinet in the absence of senior AAP leaders, Chief Minister-designate Atishi's ascent in the party and government is believed to be "phenomenal" and "meteoric". She handles the most number of portfolios including Finance, Education, PWD, Power & Water.

CAREER TIMELINE

- 3rd woman CM after Sheila Dikshit & Sushma Swaraj
- Founding members of Aam Aadmi Party along with Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia
- A key member of the 2013 Manifesto Drafting Committee
- Political advisor to Sisodia from 2015 to 2018
- Made entry into the electoral foray in 2019
- In 2020, elected as MLA from Kalkaji after Assembly polls
- In 2022, she addressed the United Nations General Assembly

CONTRIBUTIONS

EDUCATION REFORMS ARCHITECT: Atishi is known for her role as one of the key architects of Delhi's famed education revolution, when she played a key role in improving the infrastructure of the Delhi government schools, forming School Management Committees (SMCs), strengthening regulations to restrain private schools from hiking fees arbitrarily and introducing the Happiness Curriculum. She also improved teachers's training, supported agendas that distributed free textbooks and uniforms

INCREASED BUDGET ALLOCATION: During her tenure, there was a substantial rise in expenditure on education that helped the government schools to improve their infrastructure and facilities

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

1 While Sisodia and Kejriwal were in jail, she took care and defended the government whenever it was on a sticky wicket

2 Went on a hunger strike to demand water share from Haryana when Delhi was grappling with an acute shortage of water

3 During the Maliwal alleged assault case, she vehemently thwarted criticism by the Opposition parties

PERSONAL LIFE

Born in **1981** to Vijay Singh and Tripta Wahi

Before venturing into active politics, Atishi had dropped her surname Marlena, a portmanteau of Marx and Lenin, since she wanted her political affiliations to not be misconstrued

Atishi will be 'dummy' CM, says MP Maliwal; AAP asks her to quit

New Delhi, 17 Sept

Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal on Tuesday claimed that AAP leader Atishi, who has been chosen as Delhi's new chief minister, will be a "dummy" CM. Reacting to the allegations, AAP leader Dilip Pandey said if Maliwal has a little bit of shame, she should quit the Upper House seat. "Today, it is a very sad day for Delhi. A woman is going to be the chief minister of Delhi whose family fought for terrorist Afzal Guru in order to save him from capital punishment. She further alleged, "Today Atishi will become the chief minister, but we all know that she will be a dummy CM." "I want to say that if she (Maliwal) has a little bit of shame, she should give up her AAP's Rajya Sabha ticket and should resign from the post. —*PTI*

Many congratulations @AtishiAAP Ji. Wish you would take effectively on dictatorial forces and work towards a developed and dynamic Dilli

—Abhishek Singhvi, Senior Congress leader

'Chehara badalane se AAP ka charitra nahi badalega' (changing the face does not change AAP's character)... Considering Kejriwal's 10 years of corruption, whoever is the CM will have to tell people how they looted the people of Delhi

— Virendra Sachdeva, Delhi BJP Chief

As a combative and determined young chief minister, may she be successful in every role of hers

—Akhilesh Yadav, Samajwadi Party president

Jarange begins his 6th fast over Maratha quota

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 17 SEPT

Maratha activist Manoj Jarange on Tuesday launched a fresh indefinite fast, his sixth in a span of over a year, to press for the demand for reservation to his community under the OBC category. He began the stir from midnight at his native Antarwali Sarati village of Jalna district, around 75 km from here. Jarange accused the Maharashtra government of not giving reservation to the community deliberately, and said the Marathas were giving "once more chance" to Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to resolve quota issue. He also warned the ruling parties on the consequences. —*PTI*

Vande Bharat flag off: UP BJP MLA falls on rail track

ETAWAH, 17 SEPT

BJP's Etawah MLA Sarita Bhadauriya fell onto the railway tracks while vying to wave the green flag for the Agra-Varanasi Vande Bharat Express here on Monday. Purported videos of the incident surfaced on social media. The incident occurred amidst a crowded platform as the train arrived around 6 pm. The 61-year-old second-term BJP leader was among a host of people holding the green flag. Following the virtual inauguration of the Vande Bharat train by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the train, numbered 20175, was flagged off by the Rail Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu from Agra. —*PTI*

Lalu's aide gets bail in money laundering case

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Delhi High Court on Tuesday granted bail to RJD chief Lalu Prasad's close aide Amit Katyal in a money laundering case linked to the alleged land-for-jobs scam in the Indian Railways, while deprecating the "pick and choose" policy adopted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The court noted that despite there being no arrest of any other accused in the case and irrespective of the fact that Katyal had joined the probe, he was arrested unceremoniously from the Indira Gandhi International Airport. "The necessity of arrest of the petitioner (Katyal) has not been explained by the respondents. —*PTI*

Simultaneous polls soon: Shah on NDA's 100th day

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said the BJP-led NDA government will implement the 'one nation, one election' within its current tenure.

Addressing a press conference here to mark the 100 days of the third consecutive term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Shah said, "We plan to implement one nation one poll within the tenure of this government.

Shah was flanked by I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at the press conference.

In his Independence Day address last month, the prime minister made a strong pitch for 'one nation, one election', contending that frequent polls were creating hurdles in the country's progress.

"The nation has to come forward for 'one nation, one election'," Modi had said in his address from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

He also said the Waqf (Amendment) Bill was committed to the management and preservation of Waqf properties and would be passed in Parliament in the coming days.

Amit Shah **PHOTO: PTI**

On Manipur, he said the government is talking to both the Meitei and Kuki communities in Manipur to ensure lasting peace and has begun fencing the country's border with Myanmar to check infiltration. Shah said barring three days of violence last week, the overall situation in Manipur has been calm and the government has been working to restore peace in the restive Northeastern state.

Shah, flanked by Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, said apart from the three days of violence, no major incidents were reported in the last three months. —*PTI*

PM releases ₹2K cr for free houses

Raipur, 17 Sept

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday virtually released the first instalment of Rs 2,044 crore to 5.11 lakh beneficiaries in Chhattisgarh for the construction of houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G). He attended the programme titled 'Mor Awas - Mor Adhikar' (My house, my right meant to disburse the amount under the housing scheme via video link from Bhubaneswar. Modi transferred the first instalment of Rs 2,044 crore directly into the bank accounts of 5.11 lakh beneficiaries under the PMAY-G in the state. —*PTI*

Kharge writes to PM on remarks against Rahul

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge raised with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday the issue of "extremely objectionable" and violent statements by ruling alliance members targeting Rahul Gandhi and urged him to discipline his leaders.

In his letter to Modi, Kharge asserted that strict legal action should be taken against those giving such statements so that Indian politics can be prevented from degenerating and nothing untoward happens.

"I want to draw your attention to an issue which is directly related to democracy and the Constitution. You must be aware that a series of extremely objectionable, violent and rude statements are being made against the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi," Congress chief said.

"I have to say with sadness that the violent language used by the leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party and your allies is harmful for the future. The world is shocked that the Minister of State for Railways in the central government, a minister from BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, is calling the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha 'number one terrorist'," Kharge said.

In his letter to Modi in Hindi, Kharge said Indian culture is known throughout the world for non-violence, harmony and love. —*PTI*

Cong, its ecosystem angry with me for participating in Ganesha pooja: PM

BHUBANESWAR, 17 SEPT

Narendra Modi **PHOTO: PTI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said Congress and its "ecosystem" was angry with him for taking part in Ganesha Puja. Addressing a rally in Bhubaneswar, PM Modi made the comment in an apparent reference to the criticism by the Opposition parties for participating in Ganesh Puja rituals at the residence of CJI DY Chandrachud. "Ganesh Utsav is not just a festival of faith for our country. It played a very important role in the freedom movement," he said. "Even at that time, the British who followed the policy of divide and rule used to hate Ganesh Utsav. You must have seen that the people of Congress and its ecosystem are angry because I participated in Ganesh Puja," he added. Modi also said that Lord Ganesh was "put behind bars" in Karnataka by these people. —*PTI*

Modi 3.0 once again 'failed to act' on mass unemployment crisis, says Cong

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Jairam Ramesh **PHOTO: PTI**

Congress on Tuesday claimed that the first 100 days of Modi 3.0 was marked by a litany of U-turns and a series of scandals with the government yet again having "failed to act" on India's "mass unemployment crisis".

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said "the non-biological PM and his drumbeating economists" have consistently attacked the idea of jobless growth but the reality of what has been seen since 2014 is perhaps even more stark -- "job-loss growth". "Yesterday marked a hundred days of this unstable, crisis-ridden Government. Amidst a litany of u-turns and a series of scandals, the government has yet again failed to act on India's mass unemployment crisis – an issue which Congress has been consistently sounding the alarm on for the past five years at least," he said. —*PTI*

CBI report on RG Kar case disturbing: SC

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the CBI to submit a status report on the probe into alleged financial irregularities at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata where a trainee doctor was raped and murdered.

The top court also perused the status report filed by the central probe agency concerning the rape and murder incident and said disclosing the status will jeopardise further investigation.

Refusing to stop streaming live proceedings in the suo motu case related to the incident, the apex court said it was a matter of public interest and the public must know what is transpiring in the courtroom.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra asked the central agency to file a status report on the probe so far on the alleged financial irregularities in the medical departments of the hospital.

The court later adjourned hearing in the case and said that it would take up matter after a week.

It perused the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) report and said that disclosing the leads of the agency would not be fair as it would only lead to the dislocation of the investigation.

"The father of the deceased has made some suggestions on the leads that should be taken up for investigation. We are not making them public, we will say that these are valuable inputs and the CBI should look into them," the bench said.

During the hearing, the apex court took objection to the West Bengal government's 'Rattierer Saathi' programme which prescribes night duty avoidance for women doctors and that the working hours of women doctors should not exceed 12 hours at a time.

"The West Bengal government should correct the notification. Your duty is to provide security, you cannot say that women (doctors) cannot work at night. Pilots, the army etc all work at night. This will prejudice their (doctors) careers. The hours of duty should be reasonable for all doctors," the bench said.

After the top court's objection, the West Bengal government told the bench that it would withdraw the notification for women doctors. —*PTI*

ED raids 6 locations in RG Kar 'financial irregularities'

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Kolkata, 17 Sept

Enforcement Directorate (ED) officers on Tuesday morning started simultaneous raids at six locations in Kolkata, including the residence of a TMC MLA, in connection with their investigation into the alleged financial irregularities at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, an officer of the agency said. Search operations were underway at the Sithi residence of TMC's Serampore MLA Sudipto Roy and the house of a medicine dealer, besides four other places, he said. As a part of their probe into the alleged financial irregularities, CBI has already arrested former principal of the hospital, Sandip Ghosh and three of his associates. —*PTI*

MVA seat-sharing talks to be held from 18-20 Sept

MUMBAI, 17 SEPT

The three Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies will hold seat-sharing talks from 18 to 20 September for the upcoming Maharashtra Assembly elections, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said on Tuesday.

He said deliberations will be held on the seats to be contested, and the formula once decided during this meeting will be final.

While the Opposition MVA comprises Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (SP) and Congress, the ruling Mahayuti has Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Ajit Pawar-led NCP as its constituents.

When asked that Congress and NCP (SP) clinched a higher strike rate than Shiv Sena (UBT) in this year's Lok Sabha elections, Raut said his party's votes were transferred to these two parties in a big way.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) ceded Kolhapur, Amravati and Ramtek, the seats it traditionally contested, to Congress,

Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule has said the constituents of the Mahayuti alliance - Shiv Sena, BJP, and NCP - have arrived at a consensus on contesting 70 to 80 per cent of the 288 seats for elections.

₹29K cr worth projects underway; false says Oppn

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Tuesday asserted his government was committed to develop Marathwada region in the State in a time-bound manner, and said projects worth Rs 29,000 crore were underway for its development.

The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), however, targeted the Shinde saying his claim of development works worth Rs 29,000 crore were underway was "false". Leader of Opposition in the legislative council Ambadas Danve announced a cash reward of Rs 1 lakh if any such development work was found to be currently on. —PTI

PHOTO: X/@REPTOMSUOZZI

US lawmakers condemn vandalism of temple in NY

NEW YORK, 17 SEPT

Bipartisan lawmakers across the US have strongly condemned the vandalism at a Hindu temple here and called for an investigation into the incident, asserting that America must stand together against all forms of hate. The road and the signage outside the BAPS Swaminarayan Temple in Melville, New York, were sprayed with expletives on Monday, according to footage shared online. The BAPS Public Affairs said in a post on X that it was deeply saddened by the desecration of the temple, calling it an "act aimed at inciting hatred against Hindus". "Today, local, state & federal leaders gathered to promote peace, respect and unity. Guided by our faith, we stand united against hate with compassion and solidarity," it said. Melville is located in in Suffolk County, on Long Island and is about 28 kilometres from the 16,000-seater Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to address a mega community event on 22 September. US lawmakers across party lines strongly condemned the vandalism, calling for perpetrators to be held accountable. *—PTI*

Pak businessmen demand urgent infra overhaul

KARACHI, 17 SEPT

Business leaders in Karachi have urged Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Karachi Mayor Waseem Akhtar to address the city's deteriorating infrastructure issues, The Express Tribune reported. The report stated that the leaders called for an immediate renovation of roads in major markets and the repair of the collapsed sewerage system, which they claim is causing severe traffic congestion and harming local businesses. They also highlighted poor road conditions and failing sewer systems, which are leading to environmental pollution and discouraging shoppers from visiting markets. *—PTI*

Military training camp in Mali's capital attacked

BAMAKO, 17 SEPT

A military training camp in Mali's capital was attacked by extremists early Tuesday, said the army. Gunmen attempted to infiltrate the Faladie gendarme school and a sweep operation is underway, said a statement from the military. The army said the situation was under control and asked people to avoid the area. Early Tuesday morning an Associated Press reporter heard two explosions and saw smoke rise in the distance. The training school is located on the outskirts of the city. Mali, along with its neighbours Burkina Faso and Niger, has for over a decade battled an insurgency fought by armed groups, including some allied with al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. *—AP*

Rapper Sean 'Diddy' indicted for sex trafficking

NEW YORK CITY, 17 SEPT

Rapper Sean 'Diddy' Combs was arrested in New York City amid a federal sex trafficking investigation. The music mogul was taken into custody on Monday (local time) following a grand jury's indictment, though the specific charges were not clear, The Hollywood Reporter reported. Combs' attorney Marc Agnifilo shared,"We are disappointed with the decision to pursue what we believe is an unjust prosecution of Combs by the US Attorney's Office." He said, "Sean 'Diddy' Combs is a music icon, loving family man, and proven philanthropist who has spent the last 30 years building an empire, adoring his children, and working to uplift the Black community. He is an imperfect person but not a criminal." *—ANI*

Typhoon Yagi: Death toll rises to over 500 in S Asia

BANGKOK, 17 SEPT

Floods and landslides in Myanmar triggered by last week's Typhoon Yagi and seasonal monsoon rains have claimed at least 226 lives, with 77 people missing, state-run media reported Tuesday.

The new figures push the total number of dead in Southeast Asia from the storm past 500. The accounting of casualties has been slow, in part due to communication difficulties with the affected areas. Myanmar is wracked by a civil war that began in 2021 after the army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Independent analysts believe the ruling military controls much less than half of the country's territory.

Typhoon Yagi earlier hit Vietnam, northern Thailand and Laos, killing almost 300 people in Vietnam, 42 in Thailand and four in Laos, according to the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance. It said 21 people were killed in the Philippines, with another 26 missing.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said on Monday that an estimated 6,31,000 people may have been affected by flooding across Myanmar. There were already 3.4 million displaced people in Myanmar at the beginning of September, according to the UN refugee agency, mostly because of war and unrest in recent years.

Heavy rains from the typhoon and the seasonal monsoon brought widespread flash floods to Myanmar, especially the central regions of Mandalay, Magway, Bago and the Ayeyarwaddy Delta; the eastern states Shan, Kayah, Kayin and Mon; and the country's capital, Naypyitaw. Some flooded areas have started to see water levels recede but others in the Shan and Kayah states remain critical.

More than 1,60,000 houses have been damaged and 438 temporary relief camps have been opened for more than 1,60,000 flood victims, Myanma Alinn reported. The military government announced that nearly 2,40,000 people have been displaced. *—AP*

A man attempts to clear his half-submerged house in flooded area in Naypyitaw, Myanmar on Tuesday **PHOTO: AP/PTI**

Trump killing spree: Suspect 'lay in wait' for 12 hours

White House blasts Elon Musk for X post about Biden & Harris

WEST PALM BEACH, 17 SEPT

The man suspected in an apparent assassination attempt targeting Donald Trump camped outside a Florida golf course with food and a rifle for nearly 12 hours, lying in wait for the former president before a Secret Service agent thwarted the potential attack and opened fire, according to court documents filed Monday.

Ryan Wesley Routh did not fire any shots, never had Trump in his line of sight and sped away after being shot at by an agent who spotted him, officials said. He was arrested in a neighbouring county.

Routh, 58, appeared in federal court in West Palm Beach to face federal firearms charges, starting a criminal case in the final weeks of a presidential race already touched by violence and upheaval. Though no one was injured, the episode marked the second attempt on Trump's life in as many months, raising questions about the security provided to him during a time of amped-up political rhetoric and what the Secret Service chief called an "unprecedented and hyper-dynamic threat environment."

Even as Trump's Republican allies and some Democrats demanded answers about how a would-be shooter was able to get so close to Trump, Ronald Rowe Jr., the Secret Service's acting director, offered a fiery defense of the agents he said were "rising to this moment" despite needing additional resources.

Police block off the road alongside the Mar-a-Lago estate in US on Monday after the assassination attempt on Donald Trump **PHOTO: PTI**

The agent fired, and Routh escaped into a sport utility, leaving behind a digital camera, a backpack, a loaded SKS-style assault rifle and a plastic bag containing food. He had been at the golf course's tree line from 1:59 am to 2:31 pm, according to an FBI affidavit that cited cellphone data. The FBI is continuing to investigate how long the Hawaii man had been in Florida, said Jeffrey Veltri, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Miami field office.

Body camera footage posted Monday on Facebook by the Martin County sheriff's office showed Routh's arrest. The video shows him walking backward with his hands over his head on the side of a road before being handcuffed and led away by law enforcement. Routh wrote that he once voted for Trump and must take part of the blame for the "child that we elected for our next president that ended up being brainless." Voter records show he registered as an unaffiliated voter in North Carolina in 2012, most recently voting in person during the state's Democratic primary in March. *—AP*

Trump blames Biden, Harris over their remark

NEW YORK, 17 SEPT

Donald Trump claimed without evidence Monday that President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris' comments that he is a threat to democracy had inspired the latest apparent attempt on his life, despite his own long history of inflammatory campaign rhetoric and advocacy for jailing or prosecuting his political enemies. With the election now just 50 days away and early ballots already being mailed out in some places, this year's presidential campaign was among the most turbulent in American history even before Sunday's apparent assassination attempt. The Republican former president's statements are a sharp departure from how he reacted after an assassination attempt in July during a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, in which a bullet grazed his ear. Then, Trump called for national unity, saying in a social media post that "it is more important than ever that we stand United." *—AP*

EU chief to unveil her new team for the next five years

BRUSSELS, 17 SEPT

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen is expected to unveil the members of her new team for the next five-year tenure at the head of the bloc on Tuesday.

But it has been a tumultuous ride to get it ready for office — the search for the 26 members of her college was chaotic and scandal-ridden even before the Parliament is to start hearings on whether to accept each proposed candidate.

French heavyweight Thierry Breton resigned and openly criticised von der Leyen for allegedly "questionable governance" on Monday and accused her of backroom machinations to oust him.

Many saw his shock resignation more as a removal by von der Leyen of one of her most open internal critics after exerting pressure on French authorities.

Compounding such problems was the defiance of many of the 27 member states as von der Leyen struggled to get anywhere close to gender parity on her Commission team — they staunchly refused to give her a choice between a male and a female candidate.

After days of secret talks with individual European governments about their picks, von der Leyen huddled with the leaders of the political groups at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, to discuss the makeup of her college.

Her full announcement was expected later Tuesday. The Commission proposes legislation for the EU's 27 member countries and ensures that the rules governing the world's biggest trading bloc are respected. It's made up of a College of Commissioners with a range of portfolios similar to those of government ministers, including agriculture, economic, competition, security and migration policy. *—AP*

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen during the conference **PHOTO: X/@HDNER**

- Many saw his shock resignation more as a removal by von der Leyen of one of her most open internal critics after exerting pressure on French authorities

Facebook owner Meta bans Russia state media outlets

LONDON, 17 SEPT

Meta said it's banning Russia state media organisation from its social media platforms, alleging that the outlets used deceptive tactics to amplify Moscow's propaganda. The announcement drew a rebuke from the Kremlin on Tuesday.

The company, which owns Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, said late Monday that it will roll out the ban over the next few days in an escalation of its efforts to counter Russia's covert influence operations.

"After careful consideration, we expanded our ongoing enforcement against Russian state media outlets: Rossiya Segodnya, RT and other related entities are now banned from our apps globally for foreign interference activity," Meta said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov lashed out, saying that "such selective actions against Russian media are unacceptable."

"We have an extremely negative attitude towards this. And this, of course, complicates the prospects for normalising our relations with Meta," Peskov told reporters during his daily conference call. *—AP*

Indian entrepreneur sells pvt arm of UK-based grp

LONDON, 17 SEPT

Tails Trading Group, a UK-based supplier of multi-category consumer packaged goods led by an Indian entrepreneur, has announced the sale of its private labelling arm to a large international investor consortium for GBP 395 million. The group's labelling division has been a key supplier of a wide range of products including food and beverages, personal hygiene items, small domestic appliances and household cleaning products, with its diverse client base made up of large retailers, hotels, airlines and regional importers across North America and Europe.

Terming this as a "strategic move" marking a significant milestone in his company's evolution, Siddharth Shankar, CEO of Tails Trading Group, said in a statement this week: "We welcome this bid and are confident that the business and its social impact are safe, if not in better hands, with the new management."

The investor consortium is led by energy major NetOil and includes companies from the consumer brand distribution sector in Europe, a prominent American retailer, and a green supply chain company from the US. The buyers intend to pay the sellers via a mix of cash and stock, with payments spread over the course of the next three years. As someone who arrived in the UK from India in 2016 to complete his MBA from Strathclyde Business School, the entrepreneur is also passionate about the opportunities within the India-UK corridor. *—PTI*

14 KILLED

Halting Hezbollah attacks is now war goal, says Israel

JERUSALEM, 17 SEPT

Israel announced Tuesday that halting Hezbollah's attacks in the north in order to allow its residents to return is now an official war goal, as the country considers a wider military operation that could ignite an all-out conflict.

Israeli officials have repeatedly threatened to take heavier military action to halt the near-daily attacks, which began shortly after the outbreak of the nearly yearlong Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Israel has regularly launched airstrikes in response and has targeted and killed senior Hezbollah commanders. As recently as last month it appeared a full-blown war was imminent.

The tit-for-tat strikes have displaced tens of thousands of people on both sides of the border. Hezbollah has said it would halt the attacks if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, but those talks have repeatedly bogged down. The United States has pressed for restraint even as it has rushed military aid to Israel, warning its close ally that a wider war would not achieve its goals.

The announcement on Lebanon came after Israel's security Cabinet met late into the night. It said the Cabinet has "updated the objectives of the war" to include safely returning the residents of the north to their homes. "Israel will continue to act to implement this objective," it said.

US envoy Amos Hochstein, who has made several visits to Lebanon and Israel to try to ease tensions, met with Netanyahu on Monday. Hochstein told the Prime Minister that intensifying the conflict with Hezbollah would not help achieve the goal of returning Israelis to their homes, according to a US official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the private talks.

Netanyahu told Hochstein that residents cannot return without "a fundamental change in the security situation in the north," according to a statement from the prime minister's office.

It said that while Netanyahu "appreciates and respects" US support, Israel will "do what is necessary to safeguard its security." Defence Minister Gallant has meanwhile said the focus of the conflict is shifting from Gaza to Israel's north. He told US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin this week that time is running out for an agreement with Hezbollah, saying "the trajectory is clear." *—AP*

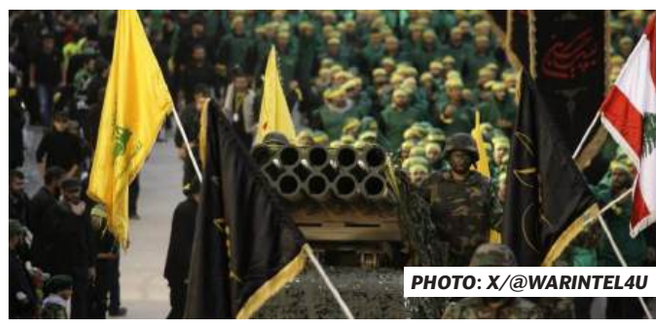


PHOTO: X/@WARINTEL4U

ADB assures Pak $2B in new loans annually: Report

ISLAMABAD, 17 SEPT

The Asian Development Bank has assured Pakistan it will provide USD 2 billion annually in new loans to the cash-strapped country amid the government's inability to get cheaper credit due to its worsened ratings, according to a media report on Tuesday.

The assurance was given by the visiting Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Masatsugu Asakawa during his interaction with Pakistani authorities on Monday, The Express Tribune newspaper reported, citing Ministry of Economic Affairs officials.

The Manila-based lender is expected to provide USD 2 billion per annum from 2024 to 2027, the officials said, adding that the total four-year package amounts to USD 8 billion. Out of the USD 2 billion, the ADB will give around USD 1 billion at a fixed 2 per cent rate under its concessional window.

Despite having reached a staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Pakistan has become a desperate borrower in recent years, striking deals at unsustainably higher interest rates – ranging from 7 per cent to as high as 11 per cent, indicative of lender's scepticism about Islamabad's creditworthiness, the report said.

Three international credit rating agencies have placed Pakistan below the investment grade, a major hurdle in tapping the foreign capital markets. *—PTI*

SEVERE FOOD CRISIS

At least 10 children dying every day in Sudan

KHARTOUM, 17 SEPT

In the small town of Tawila, in Sudan's North Darfur state, at least 10 children are dying of hunger every day.

In recent months, tens of thousands of people fleeing North Darfur's capital, the besieged and war-torn El Fasher, about 70km to the east, have sought refuge in the town, overwhelming Tawila's one functioning health clinic.

"We anticipate that the exact number of children dying of hunger is much higher," said Aisha Hussien Yagoub, the woman responsible for health in the civilian administration that runs Tawila. "Many of those displaced from El Fasher are living far from our clinic and are unable to reach it." Hunger is not the only killer. Malaria, measles and whooping cough have also been spreading like wildfire.

The city has been under a months-long siege by the Rapid Support Forces **PHOTO: THE GUARDIAN**

Hussien said she knew of 19 women who died during labour in the first two weeks of July alone. Still more have died from untreated injuries sustained amid fighting in the vicinity of El Fasher's two refugee camps, Abu Shouk and Zamzam.

The city has been under a months-long siege by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the paramilitary group engaged alongside allied militia in a brutal civil war against the Sudanese army and its allies. Tawila, itself the scene of fierce fighting last year, is the nearest place of relative safety for refugees who have managed to escape through El Fasher's western gate, the city's only open exit route.

Many do not make it to the town, dying on the long and terrifying walk from El Fasher, along roads that run past burnt-out villages and are targeted by armed gangs. *—The Guardian*

IN RECORD HIGH, SENSEX CROSSES 83K FOR 1ST TIME

Nifty gained 34.80 pts to settle at an all-time peak of 25,418.55

MUMBAI, 17 SEPT

Benchmark Sensex rose by nearly 91 points to close at a fresh lifetime high while Nifty settled above the 25,400 level for the first time supported by firm global trends ahead of the much-awaited US Fed's decision on interest rates.

Extending its record-setting spree for the second day, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 90.88 points or 0.11 per cent to settle at a lifetime high of 83,079.66. During the day, it rose by 163.63 points or 0.19 per cent to 83,152.41.

The NSE Nifty gained 34.80 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at an all-time peak of 25,418.55.

Among 30 Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel, NTPC, Mahindra & Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Titan, Larsen & Toubro, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and Reliance Industries were the biggest gainers.

Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Adani Ports, JSW Steel, ITC and Asian Paints were the biggest laggards.

In Asian markets, Hong Kong settled with gains while Tokyo ended lower. Markets in mainland China and South Korea were closed.

Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 1,634.98 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.25 per cent to USD 72.52 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark climbed 97.84 points or 0.12 per cent to settle at a new record peak of 82,988.78 on Monday. The Nifty rose by 27.25 points or 0.11 per cent to settle at 25,383.75. During the day, the benchmark hit a new intra-day record peak of 25,445.70. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

India's exports decline 9.3% to $34.71 billion in August

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

India's merchandise exports in August declined 9.3 per cent to USD 34.71 billion from USD 38.28 billion in the year-ago month, according to government data released on Tuesday. Imports increased by 3.3 per cent to USD 64.36 billion in August against USD 62.3 billion a year ago. The trade deficit, or the gap between imports and exports, during the month under review ballooned to USD 29.65 billion. India's merchandise exports dipped by 1.5 per cent in July. Exports during April-August this fiscal increased 1.14 per cent to USD 178.68 billion, and imports grew 7 per cent to USD 295.32 billion. *—PTI*

Bajaj & PN Gadgil shares hit upper circuit limit

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Shares of newly-listed Bajaj Housing Finance Ltd on Tuesday surged 10 per cent to hit the upper circuit limit, extending the listing day gains.

The stock jumped 10 per cent to hit the upper circuit limit of Rs 181.48 on the BSE.

At the NSE, shares of the firm surged 10 per cent to Rs 181.50 -- the highest trading permissible limit for the day.

The company's market valuation climbed Rs 12,417.27 crore to Rs 1,49,823.36 crore.

The stock was listed at Rs 150 on the BSE and NSE, reflecting a jump of 114.28 per cent from the issue price.

Meanwhile, shares of jewellery retail chain PN Gadgil Jewellers Ltd made a remarkable market debut on Tuesday, listing with a premium of nearly 74 per cent, against the issue price of Rs 480. *—PTI*

Downdetector shows users flagging issues on social media **PHOTO: @JIO.**

Jio users flag network issues; co says fully restored

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Reliance Jio users complained of connectivity issues early Tuesday with the Downdetector heatmap showing users reporting problems in some parts.

Reliance Jio spokesperson said while Jio customers in Mumbai faced problems in availing seamless services this morning due to "minor technical issues", the same has been resolved.

"This morning, some Jio customers in Mumbai faced problems in availing seamless services on account of minor technical issues. The same have been resolved, and seamless services of Jio have been fully restored," Reliance Jio spokesperson said.

The spokesperson added: "We regret the inconvenience to our subscribers".

Outage tracking website Downdetector showed Jio users flagging issues, right from absence of signal to patchy internet connectivity, while many subscribers took to social media platforms to share humorous memes.

As users faced network disruptions, social media platform X (formerly Twitter) was quickly filled with complaints.

The hashtag #JioDown started trending, with users from various parts of the country sharing their frustrations.

Alongside complaints, many users also lightened the mood by posting humorous memes and jokes about the outage, making the best of an inconvenient situation. *—PTI*

Gold imports doubled to record high of $10.06B

MUMBAI, 17 SEPT

Gold imports more than doubled in August to a record high of USD 10.06 billion, mainly on account of a drastic cut in customs duty and ongoing festive demand, according to the Commerce Ministry data. Gold imports stood at USD 4.93 billion in August 2023. In the Budget, the government slashed the duty from 15 per cent to 6 per cent. India's gold imports, which have a bearing on the country's current account deficit (CAD), dipped by 4.23 per cent to USD 12.64 billion during April-July 2024-25. In 2023-24, India's gold imports surged by 30 per cent to USD 45.54 billion. Switzerland is the largest source of gold imports,, followed by the UAE (over 16 per cent) and South Africa (about 10 per cent). The precious metal accounts for over 5 per cent of the country's total imports. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 11P to settle at 83.75 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 17 SEPT

The rupee appreciated by 11 paise to settle at 83.75 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday amid a weaker greenback against major currencies and a decline in crude oil prices. The decline in wholesale inflation to a four-month-low and a strong domestic market pushed up the domestic unit, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 83.87, down 1 paisa from its previous close and traded in the range of 83-70 to 83.87 during the day. It settled at 83.75 against the US dollar (provisional), up 11 paise from its previous close of 83.86. India's WPI inflation cooled off to 1.31 per cent in August, as against 2.04 per cent in July. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.15 per cent to 100.60. *—PTI*

Zydus Lifesciences to acquire Sterling's biz for ₹84 crore

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Zydus Lifesciences Ltd on Tuesday said it will acquire the 'Target Business' of Sterling Biotech primarily engaged in manufacturing of fermentation-based active pharmaceutical ingredients products and a production facility at Masa in Gujarat for a pre-agreed sum of Rs 84 crore. In August this year when Zydus acquired a 50 per cent stake in Sterling Biotech Ltd (SBL), the company negotiated for the right to acquire the 'Target Business' of SBL at a pre-defined value. "This right has been exercised by the company," Zydus Lifesciences said in a regulatory filing. The board of directors of the company at their meeting held on 17 September, 2024, have approved a business transfer agreement (BTA) to purchase the active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) business -- the Target Business -- of SBL, on a going concern basis, on slump sale basis, without values being assigned to individual assets. *—PTI*

Myntra's GenZ customer base doubles to 16M

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Lifestyle e-commerce platform Myntra on Tuesday said it has doubled its GenZ customer base to 16 million in 2024 from over 8 million in mid-2023. The growth was led by Myntra's GenZ fashion vertical FWD -- an app-in-app offering, it said. "With the online trend-first fashion market expected to grow over 8x into a USD 5 billion market by 2028, FWD by Myntra is...taking charge in reshaping fashion for young India, reflecting Myntra's commitment to staying ahead of GenZ's rapidly evolving trends and preferences," a company statement said. Flipkart-owned Myntra looks forward to adding another 20-25 million GenZ. *—PTI*

India and US push for sustainable aviation fuel

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

India and the US have agreed to give impetus to sustainable aviation fuel, promote electrification of medium and heavy-duty vehicles and use of hydrogen in buses, tractors and heavy equipment, said a joint statement issued after the Strategic Clean Energy Partnership dialogue between the two nations.

The two nations "welcomed increased investment in each country's clean energy markets," according to the statement issued after the Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP) Ministerial convened by US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm and Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri in Washington DC on Monday.

"While recognising the need to work towards a just, orderly and sustainable energy transition, which prioritises access to reliable, affordable, and clean energy supplies, the (two) sides welcomed the important role that energy trade plays in supporting the national priorities of both countries," the statement said.

The two countries highlighted the importance of modernising the power distribution sector to supply 24x7 reliable power to consumers, welcomed support for India's smart metering deployment, as well as expanded efforts on inverter-based resources, power market reforms, system inertia estimation, and cybersecurity. *—PTI*

India & US welcome investment in energy markets **PHOTO: PTI**

IN A RELIEF

Rise in inflation is primarily due to increases in the prices of food articles, processed food products, textiles, and machinery equipment **PHOTO: PTI**

Wholesale inflation falls to 1.31% for 2 months in a row

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

The annual rate of inflation based on the all-India Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for August 2024 eased to 1.31 per cent, a provisional figure compared to 2.04 per cent in July 2024.

According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the rise in inflation is primarily due to increases in the prices of food articles, processed food products, textiles, machinery and equipment.

Despite the inflation, the rate has moderated from 2.04 per cent in July 2024, indicating some easing of price pressures.

The WPI for all commodities in August stood at 154.5, showing a slight decrease from 155.2 in July. Primary articles, which hold a weightage of 22.62 per cent, registered an index of 194.9 with a year-on-year inflation rate of 2.42 per cent, down from 3.08 per cent in July.

The drop in primary articles was driven by declining prices in minerals, crude petroleum, and natural gas.

Manufactured products, which make up 64.23 per cent of the index, registered a minimal decline in their index from 141.7 in July to 141.6 in August, with an inflation rate of 1.22 per cent.

The Manufactured Products group saw a marginal decline of 0.07 per cent in August, with mixed trends across sectors.

Some industries, such as food products, machinery, and motor vehicles, witnessed price increases, while others, including basic metals, chemicals, and textiles, recorded price decreases.

The final WPI for June 2024 has been confirmed at 154.0, with an annual inflation rate of 3.43 per cent, based on a weighted response rate of 95.9 per cent. *—ANI*

'Airfare hike not linked to rise in airport charges'

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Airport charges are an important element of the commercial aviation ecosystem for infrastructure development and increase in airfares is not linked to a rise in the charges, according to the Airports Council International (ACI).

Against the backdrop of the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) flagging concerns over a steep rise in airport charges, ACI also said that the charges will remain a critical source of revenue for airports.

"Airport charges are an important element of the commercial aviation ecosystem for infrastructure development. Failing to address the capital expenditure requirements to accommodate the projected growth could have serious socio-economic consequences," Stefano Baronci, Director General, ACI Asia Pacific & Middle East, said.

As many as 133 airport operators, operating 624 airports from 47 countries/ territories are members of ACI in the APAC & Middle East. Indian airport operators and Airports Authority of India (AAI) are also part of the grouping.

In India, tariffs for major airports are approved by the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) and in recent times, charges at some airports have gone up.

IATA represents around 330 airlines, including Indian carriers, that account for over 80 per cent of the global air traffic. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

'Zinc demand to rise in India by 2030'

UDAIPUR, 17 SEPT

Zinc demand in India is likely to witness a significant increase by 2030 on the back of emerging sectors like green energy and battery technology, the International Zinc Association said on Tuesday.

IZA is of the view that energy storage solutions are expected to see a seven-fold rise over the next five years. India, as the world's fastest growing economy is witnessing a similar surge in zinc consumption across these critical sectors.

India's record breaking steel production coupled with rapid infrastructure growth presents a pivotal opportunity for zinc. Incorporating zinc into infrastructure projects can significantly reduce the annual corrosion costs, which amount to nearly five per cent of India's GDP, it said.

IZA organised Zinc College 2024 -- an international event involving 31 companies and 21 countries -- here. During the five-day event, which began on Sunday, deliberations were held on zinc's crucial role in creating a sustainable and low-carbon future.

India's demand for zinc is set to grow rapidly, driven by urbanization and the need for durable infrastructure, IZA Chairman Arun Mishra said, adding that Zinc College 2024 is a landmark event, laying the foundation for a more sustainable and innovative zinc ecosystem.

Globally, zinc demand is likely to grow by 43 per cent in solar power applications with the wind energy sector set to double in another six years, IZA said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Industry seeks incentives as tea prices set to rise

KOLKATA, 17 SEPT

Tea production in the country has declined significantly in 2024, with Assam recording an 11 per cent drop and West Bengal seeing a 21 per cent decline up to July, according to data from the Tea Association of India.

The association attributed the decline to insufficient rainfall and excessive heat until May, followed by excessive rainfall in June and July, which hampered crop production during current season.

As per the association, the situation has been further aggravated by severe pest and disease infestations, weakening tea bushes in both West Bengal and Assam.

It also expressed concerns over the projected loss of 160-170 million kilograms of tea in 2024 due to the early closure of operations and revised crop estimates. *—ANI*

PHOTO: ANI

5 DAYS IN OFFICE

Amazon ends work from home for staff

VIRGINIA, 17 SEPT

Amazon said on Monday it would require employees to return to the office five days a week, effective 2 January.

"We've decided that we're going to return to being in the office the way we were before the onset of Covid-19. When we look back over the last five years, we continue to believe that the advantages of being together in the office are significant," Andy Jassy, the CEO, said in a note sent out to employees globally.

The e-commerce giant's previous office attendance requirement for its workers was three days a week. Amazon workers can claim "extenuating circumstances" or request exceptions from senior leadership, according to Jassy's memo.

"If anything, the last 15 months we've been back in the office at least three days a week has strengthened our conviction about the benefits." He cited improved collaboration and connection between teams as reasons for the new requirement as well as the ability to "strengthen our culture".

As part of an organisational restructuring, Amazon is looking to reduce the number of managers and boost the number of individual contributors by the end of the first quarter of 2025 to reduce bureaucracy. Like other technology companies, Amazon grew rapidly at the start of the coronavirus pandemic then laid off wide swaths of its staff.

Since Covid lockdowns first forced workers home four years ago, employers and employees have clashed over how many days of the work week must be spent in the office. In May last year, employees at Amazon's Seattle headquarters staged a walkout protesting against changes to the e-commerce giant's climate policy, layoffs and a return-to-office mandate. *—The Guardian*

As part of an organisational restructuring, Amazon is looking to reduce the number **PHOTO: PTI**

No. of Indians earning ₹10cr per annum surges to 63%

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

The number of Indians earning more than Rs 10 crore annually has surged 63 per cent in last five years, highlighted a report by Centrum Institutional Research.

The report also noted that Indians earning over Rs 5 crore annually have also gone up to to 58,200 individuals marking a 49 per cent growth.

The number of Indians earning over Rs 10 crore annually are now about 31,800 individuals, which is a 63 per cent increase over the last five years.

Furthermore, the number of people earning over Rs 50 lakh annually increased by 25 per cent to nearly 10 lakh individuals during the same period.

"The wealth of rich Indians is growing at a rapid pace; between FY19 and FY24, the number of Indians earning over Rs50mn grew by 49 per cent to 58,200, while those earning over Rs100 mn increased by 63 per cent to around 31,800" said the report.

Along with the growing number of wealthy individuals, the report also highlighted that their cumulative income also experienced rapid growth. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Can India rediscover their batting swagger at home?

CHENNAI, 17 SEPT

Blinding streaks of brilliance interspersed with gloomy barrenness often wrap KL Rahul's Test career in unfair inconsistency but skipper Rohit Sharma hoped that the "clear message" given to him will help the elegant batter to take his career forward in the longest format.

Rahul oozed class while making a hundred against South Africa in Centurion in 2023, and an 86 against England at Hyderabad earlier this year. But before that his performance went through a trough for two years, with the batter making just a fifty in 12 innings.

However, Rohit remained a firm believer in Rahul's talent, and that also was an indication that the Bengaluru man will start in the first Test against Bangladesh on Thursday here.

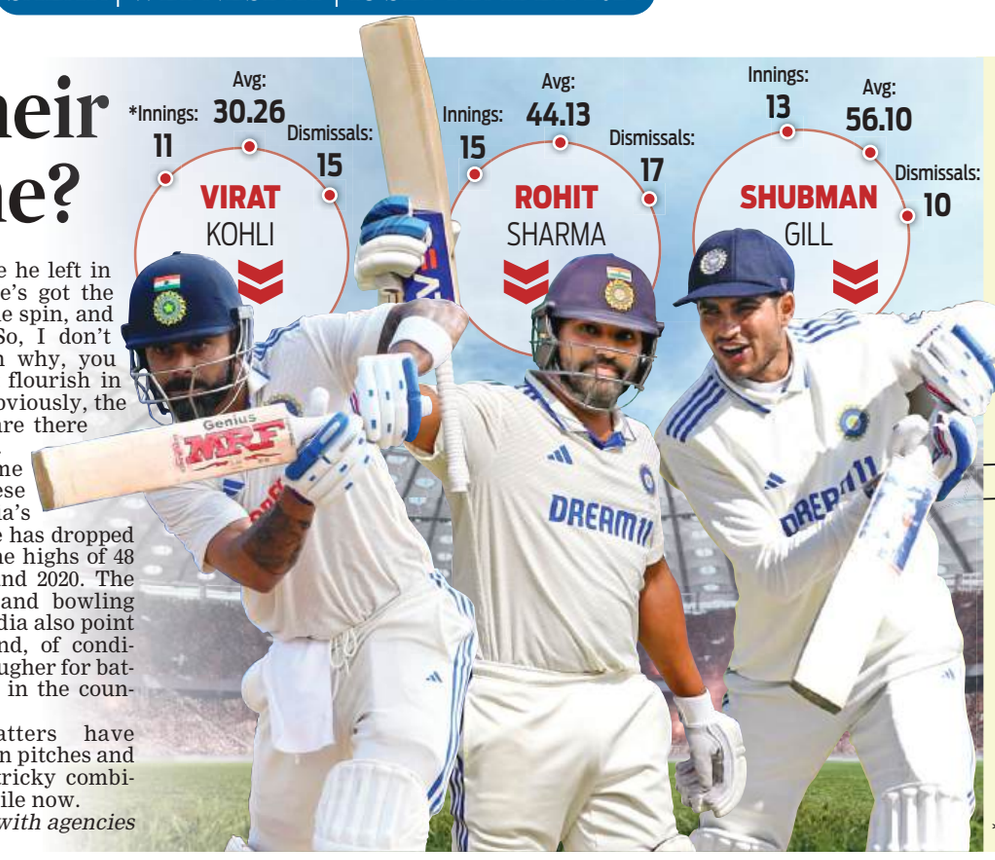
"It's important that we give him that clear message that this is what we expect from you. And I think we have done that," he added. Rohit placed immense value in Rahul's ability to play pace and spin equally well, which makes him an asset at home and away, as underlined again by his knocks against South Africa and England in conditions as different as chalk and cheese.

"He got 100 in South Africa. He got 80 in that first Test match in Hyderabad and then got injured. Unfortunately, he didn't play any of the games after that because of that injury. I hope, you know, he continues from where he left in Hyderabad. "He's got the game to play the spin, and the seamers. So, I don't see any reason why, you know, he can't flourish in Test cricket. Obviously, the opportunities are there now," he noted.

In 17 home Tests in these four years, India's batting average has dropped to 33.40 from the highs of 48 between 2016 and 2020. The lower batting and bowling averages for India also point to another trend, of conditions getting tougher for batters in general in the country.

Overseas batters have found the Indian pitches and the SG ball a tricky combination for a while now.

—PTI with agencies



AVG OF INDIAN BATTERS AGAINST SPIN AT HOME

TOP 7: 37.56 | OVERALL: 33.34

SLIPPING AGAINST SPIN

DISMISSALS 134 | AVG 37.56 (IT WAS 63.36 IN BETWEEN 2016-2020)

Balls Per Dismissal : 64.4

INDIA'S FALL OF BATTING AT HOME IN TEST SERIES

Period	Matches	Won	Lost	Batting avg	Rank
2013-2020	34	28	1	44.1	1
2021 Onwards	17	12	3	33.40	5

KEY SPINNERS INDIAN TOP ORDERS TO FACE:

Shakib Al Hasan, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam

*Statistics from 2021-2024

PHOTOS: ANI

PHOTO: X

Indian squad for SAFF U17 C'ship announced

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

The India U-17 men's team head coach Ishfaq Ahmed on Tuesday named a 23-member squad for the SAFF U17 Championship, which will be held in Bhutan. India will face Bangladesh on 20 September and Maldives on 24 in Group A of the tournament. The semifinals will take place on 28 September, followed by the final on 30. All the matches will be played at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu. The Blue Colts will depart for Thimphu from their camp in Srinagar on Wednesday. India's 23-member squad for SAFF U17 Championship: Goalkeepers: Aheibam Suraj Singh, Nandan Roy, Rohit. Defenders are: Brahmacharimayum Sumit Sharma, Chingtham Renin Singh, Jodric Abranches, Karish Soram, Mohammed Kaif, and others. *—PTI*

Two Indian teams to take part in Pickleball WC

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Two Indian teams comprising a total of nine players have been selected to compete in the Pickleball World Cup, which will be organised in Lima (Peru) from October 22-27. The Indian Pickleball Association said it was invited to send two teams to compete on the global stage. "At the recently-concluded selection trials in Ahmedabad, organised under the aegis of the IPA and the Gujarat State Pickleball Association (GSPA), nine talented players were selected to represent India." The Indian team for Open category will be led by Dhiren Patel and will feature Himansh Mehta, Suraj Desai, Rakshika Ravi and Anshi Sheth. The Seniors 50 plus category will feature Nozer Amalsdiwala, Kiran Salian, Bela Kotwani and Sujay Parekh. *—PTI*

MLC franchise keen on signing James Anderson: Report

LONDON, 17 SEPT

Former England pacer James Anderson could return to T20 cricket after a decade following a Major League Cricket team's interest in hiring his services for the upcoming 2025 season. The 42-year-old, who retired from international cricket in July, has not played any white-ball cricket since 2019. His last T20 match was the 2014 NatWest Blast final for Lancashire while his last T20 assignment for England was in 2009. However, "senior figures with at least one MLC team have had their interest pricked by Anderson's comments last month about a return to white-ball cricket," according to a 'BBC Sports' report. The franchise is looking to hire the services of England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker for the third edition of the T20 league in United States next year. *—PTI*

DOMINANT INDIA WIN FIFTH ACT HOCKEY TITLE

India retain title after beating China 1-0 in final

HULUNBUIR, 17 SEPT

A determined India claimed their fifth Hero Asian Champions Trophy title with a fighting 1-0 victory over hosts China here on Tuesday, completing a display of absolute dominance in the tournament in which they won all their matches.

Defender Jugraj Singh scored a rare field goal as the defending champions toiled hard before getting the better of their opponents. It was not easy for the Harmanpreet Singh-led India as they failed to break the Chinese defence in the first three quarters.

Eventually, Jugraj broke the deadlock in the 51st minute to hand the Paris Olympics bronze medallists the win against a resolute Chinese side, which was playing in only its second international tournament final.

Before this, China's only appearance in the final of an international tournament was in 2006 Asian Games, where they finished second-best after losing 1-3 to Korea. Pakistan defeated Korea 5-2 to bag the third spot in the six-team competition.

The Chinese defended deep and troubled their rivals with brisk counter attacks. Raj Kumar Pal had the first shy at the goal for India but his effort was saved by Chinese goalkeeper Wang Weihao.

Two minutes later, Nilakanta Sharma saw a sharp save from Wang and then, the Chinese goalkeeper showed brilliant reflexes to deny Sukhjeet Singh after being fed by Jugraj. Seconds from the end of the first quarter, India conceded a penalty corner but Krishan Bahadur Pathak was alert in front of the goal.

In the 27th minute, Sukhjeet Singh secured a penalty corner but Harmanpreet's attempt hit the post, as China did enough to hold India goalless at half time. The nimble-footed Chinese came out with renewed vigour after the change of ends, mounting a series of attacks on the Indian citadel.

China secured their second penalty corner in the 38th minute but the Indians defence was up to the task. The Chinese continued their aggressive intent, earning back-to-back penalty corners in the 40th minute but India goalkeeper Pathak was alert under the bar.

It required a brilliant burst from Harmanpreet to finally break the deadlock. The in-form India captain sneaked into the Chinese circle with some fine stick work and neatly passed the ball to fellow defender Jugraj, who pushed it in past the opposition goalkeeper, as India heaved a sigh of relief. *—PTI*

India celebrates winning the Asian Champions Trophy 2025, beating host China in the final at the Moqi Hockey Training Base in Hulunbuir on Tuesday PHOTO: X/@THEHOCKEYINDIA

RESCUE DEAL AGREED

Glasgow to host Commonwealth Games in 2026

LONDON, 17 SEPT

The Scottish government has agreed a rescue deal for a scaled-down version of the 2026 Commonwealth Games to be hosted by Glasgow, after Australian authorities offered a "multimillion-pound commitment" to save the event.

The Australian state of Victoria abruptly withdrew as host of the 2026 Games in July 2023, blaming escalating costs. Since then, speculation has grown about whether Glasgow could build on its successful hosting of the event in 2014, amid concerns from the Scottish and UK governments about financing the event.

Last Friday, Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) offered Scotland almost £100 from the Victorian government's $A380m owed compensation for pulling out of hosting the event. The announcement was made after a meeting of the Scottish cabinet on Tuesday morning, and after Scotland's health secretary, Neil Gray, met representatives of Commonwealth Games Australia and Commonwealth Games Scotland on Monday. The decision remains subject to formal approval from Commonwealth Games Scotland and the CGF.

Gray said: "I have written to the Commonwealth Games Scotland today to inform them that the Scottish government will give its support for the proposal." "Glasgow will deliver a world-class sporting event, which will help the future generations to come and support more of our Commonwealth partners."

"In return, this proposal will bring economic benefit to businesses in Glasgow and Scotland and support a programme of capital upgrades to a number of existing venues in Glasgow to create an additional legacy for public sports facilities and local communities." *—The Guardian*

Glasgow hosted the Games in 2014 PHOTO: NQ

'Don't drop wrestling from CWG 2026 roster'

NEW DELHI, 17 SEPT

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) President Sanjay Singh on Tuesday urged the Commonwealth Games Federation to retain the sport in the 2026 CWG roster but also conceded that prospective host Scotland might not relent.

India is one of the most successful wrestling nations in CWG, having won 114 medals in the sport till the 2022 edition. Wrestling was part of the CWG roster in the last three editions. The last time wrestling missed out was in 2006 when basketball replaced it. Before that, wrestling was removed in 1998 for the addition of 10-pin bowling. Scottish capital Glasgow is set to host the 2026 Commonwealth Games after Victoria pulled out, citing the huge cost of conducting the showpiece. "I met CGF President Chris Jenkins and CGF CEO Katie Sadleir during NSFs (National Sports Federations) meeting with the Commonwealth Games Federation. We told them how important it is for India and several other nations to have wrestling on the CWG roster. They said that Scotland will have a final say," Singh said.

"Wrestling is not very popular in the UK. England and Scotland do not send many wrestlers, so chances of it being retained are not very high," he said.

The last edition in Birmingham in 2022 had 20 sports with India winning 61 medals and 12 of those medals were snared by the wrestlers. Out of 22 gold medals that India won, wrestling had contributed six, the highest by any sport followed by table tennis (4) and boxing (3). *—PTI*

Top soccer players close to going on strike: ManCity's Rodri

MANCHESTER, 17 SEPT

Manchester City midfielder Rodri says top soccer players are close to going on strike because of the number of games they are having to play.

The Spain international said players are concerned about the way the game is headed as more games are added to the calendar in competitions like the Champions League, which starts on Tuesday.

Rodri was asked on Tuesday if players might start refusing to play because of the calendar. "I think we are close to that," he said in a news conference ahead of City's Champions League opener against Inter Milan on Wednesday. "It's easy to understand. You ask any player, he will say the same — it's not the opinion of (just) Rodri or whoever. I think it's a general opinion of the players.

"If it keeps this way, it will be a moment when we have no other option, I really think. It's some- thing that worries us because we are the guys who suffer." Rodri is expected to start his first game for City this season when Inter visits Etihad Stadium, having been given an extended break by the club after winning the European Championship with Spain in July.

City has two more games to play in the first stage of the Champions League and up to seven matches more in the Club World Cup, which is scheduled to take place in the United States at the end of the domestic season. Rodri said players can be expected to "perform at the highest level" if they play 40 to 50 games. Not 60 to 70 matches, a number Rodri might have to play if City goes far in all of the competitions it enters. *—AP*

Priyanshu Rajawat is ranked 36 in the world PHOTO: PTI

Priyanshu exits from first round in China Open

CHANGZHOU, 17 SEPT

Rising Indian shuttler Priyanshu Rajawat suffered a straight-game defeat to Canada's Brian Yang as he made an opening-round exit from the China Open here on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old Indian, who won the Orleans Master last year, went down 13-21 16-21 to his Canadian opponent in a 36-minute men's round-of-32 contest of the Super 1000 tournament. Rajawat, the world number 36, was a member of the Indian team that won the historic Thomas Cup title two years ago. World number 40 Kiran George is now the lone Indian challenger left in the men's singles event. He will take on Japanese shuttler Kenta Nishimoto in the round of 32. The Indian shuttler, who competed at the Paris Olympics including PV Sindhu, Lakshya Sen and the men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, are giving the tournament, the year's last BWF Super 1000 event, a miss. *—PTI*

134% INCREASE

ICC announces equal prize money for men, women

DUBAI, 17 SEPT

In a landmark decision, the International Cricket Council on Tuesday announced equal prize money for men and women in World Cups, starting with next month's women's T20 showpiece, the purse for which has been hiked by a staggering 225 per cent to USD 7.95 million.

The winners of the women's T20 World Cup will walk away with USD 2.34 million from this fund, a 134 per cent increase on the USD one million awarded to Australian women when they clinched the title in South Africa in 2023, said the ICC in a statement.

Men's T20 World Cup champions India had received USD 2.45 million in cash prize earlier this year. "The ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 will be the first ICC event where women will receive the same prize money as their male counterparts, marking a significant milestone in the sport's history," said the ICC.

The decision ensures that the ICC reached its prize money equity target seven years ahead of its schedule of 2030. The runners-up at the showpiece event next month will get USD 1.17 million, an increase of 134 per cent in comparison to the USD 5,00,000 South Africa received for reaching the final on home soil at Newlands Cricket Ground.

The two losing semi-finalists will earn USD 6,75, 000 (up from USD 210 000 in 2023), with the overall prize pot totalling USD 7,958,080, a massive increase of 225 per cent from last year's total fund of USD 2.45 million. Each win during the group stages will see teams take home USD 31,154, while the six teams who fail to reach the semi-finals will share a pool of USD 1.35 million depending on their finishing positions.

In comparison, the equivalent pool for the six teams in 2023 was USD 1,80,000, shared equally. Teams who finish third or fourth in their group will take USD 2,70,000 each while the teams who finish fifth in their group will both receive USD 1,35,000. *—PTI*

Cricket becomes the first team sport to offer equal prize money for both men's and women's World Cup PHOTO: X